# MORTUARY LANDSCAPES OF NORTH AFRICA

EDITED BY DAVID L. STONE AND LEA M. STIRLING

# Mortuary Landscapes of North Africa

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AND LEA M. STIRLING

# Mortuary Landscapes of North Africa

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# PREFACE

This volume grew out of a colloquium organized by the co-editors at the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) held in San Diego in 2001. Wanting to create a thematic session on North Africa in the AIA program, we sought a topic that would elicit diverse and synthetic papers drawing together information from multiple sites and methods from different disciplines. Our backgrounds in landscape archaeology and cemetery archaeology led us to the intersection of these topics in the form of mortuary landscapes, with a colloquium entitled 'Mortuary Traditions of North Africa.' Anna Leone (*in absentia*), David Mattingly, Jennifer Moore, Lea Stirling, David Stone, and Ann Marie Yasin all presented papers at the original colloquium, with Bruce Hitchner as a respondent.[1] Taken together, these papers spanned prehistory to Byzantine times in chronology and extended geographically from Libya to Algeria, from Saharan oases to the Mediterranean littoral.

At Bruce Hitchner's suggestion, we embarked on organizing the papers as an edited volume. Two further papers by Habib Ben Younes and Michael MacKinnon expanded and rounded out the contents. We also wrote an introduction to synthesize common themes among the papers, set them into a wider context of current archaeological issues, and explore the concept of 'mortuary landscapes' and its potential applications in North African archaeology.

Through the course of preparing this colloquium and, later, the volume, the contributors have provided valuable ideas and input about individual

1 Yasin's paper appears elsewhere as 'Funerary Monuments and Collective Identity: From Roman Family to Early Christian Community,' *Art Bulletin* 87 (2005): 433–57.

papers and the collective effort. We have profited immensely from discussions with Bruce Hitchner and Lisa Fentress. Jim Hamm and Jane Heinrichs provided able editorial assistance in Winnipeg. Jody Gordon created most of the maps for the volume. Funding from the Canada Research Council Chair in Roman Archaeology subsidized the illustrations in the book and supported the costs of research and editorial assistance.

# Mortuary Landscapes of North Africa

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# 1

# Funerary Monuments and Mortuary Practices in the Landscapes of North Africa

*David L. Stone and Lea M. Stirling*

All cultures must make choices about how and where to position the dead. Territory, labour, materials, and other resources are limited; therefore, the decisions that the living make in utilizing their environment to provide for the dead have the potential to reveal important features of human cultures. In this volume we examine the 'mortuary landscapes' of several ancient North African cultures in order to demonstrate how funerary monuments and mortuary practices have close associations with particular landscapes (fig. 1.1). Whether the subject is megalithic mounds whose round shape augments natural hills, family plots on Roman rural estates, or burial locations that accommodated early Christian beliefs, there is much evidence for the conscious association of tombs and their natural environment in this area. Funerary monuments were situated carefully within the landscape, dominating heights and exposed cliff faces or lying on major roadways and approaches to towns.

Documenting the relationship of funerary monuments to prominent topographical positions is one step towards understanding them. It is also critical to ask how tombs fit into a broader pattern of human activities in the landscape such as agriculture, worship, travel, and transhumance. In North Africa funerary monuments asserted property ownership rights, served as foci for the ritual behaviour of local inhabitants, and demonstrated identity through symbols connected to indigenous or external groups. In considering these functions we have also directed our analysis towards how, in addition to where, commemoration of the dead occurred, because we believe that archaeologists must not separate these issues. Despite evidence for the conscious association of tombs and their natural environment, however, previous scholars have analysed the architectural styles, cultural symbols,

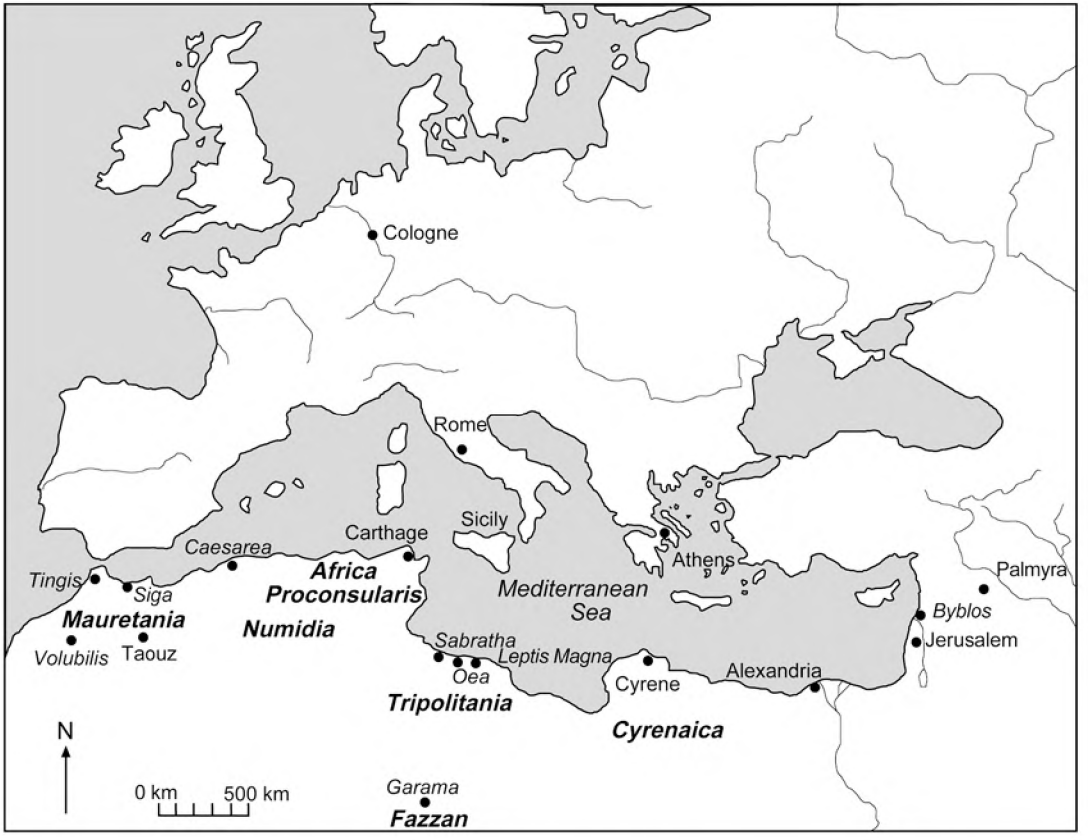


Figure 1.1 North Africa in a Mediterranean context, showing major sites discussed in the volume (J. Gordon)

and surviving texts inscribed on North African funerary monuments, but only rarely considered their relationship to surrounding spaces.[1] The main aim of this book is therefore to bring a 'landscape perspective' to North African funerary studies in the period from about 700 B.C.E. to 700 C.E.

An explanation of the landscape perspective that we seek to bring to bear on the cemeteries of North Africa is perhaps warranted. The concept of 'landscape' has been employed in so many ways by archaeologists that it now may be hard to pin down – although the existence of a single original definition is doubtful.[2] The authors in this book use landscape in a variety of ways to explore ideas of space, place, and movement in the past. At its simplest level, a landscape may refer to a specific geographic entity; at its most general, it can act as a metaphor for any sort of surroundings. Our definition of a landscape is varied; some of those that we discuss include the concentration of rock-cut tombs (*haouanet*) spread throughout north-eastern Algeria and northern Tunisia, the network of wadis and oases around which the Garamantes built their settlements and cemeteries in southern Libya, and the layout of an Early Christian town.

Apart from the desire to integrate consideration of landscapes into North African funerary studies, what purpose can a study of the mortuary archaeology of this region serve, and what makes it deserve consideration from a wide audience including Near Eastern, Greek, Roman and Byzantine archaeologists, and scholars interested in empires and mortuary studies? One compelling reason is that for the last three thousand years North Africa has been primarily controlled by outsiders and there have been few occasions when indigenous rulers have controlled the region. Under the rule of several successive foreign empires, the Berber peoples of North Africa shifted from pastoral to sedentary lifestyles, became integrated in a Mediterranean-wide economy, adopted Christianity on a large scale, and participated in a number of other widespread changes.[3] Since mortuary practices are often the venue for the display of cultural identity, funerary studies can constitute one of the best means through which archaeologists can explore such changes. The chapters in this book show that funerary monuments offer a very beneficial approach to the interaction between indigenous peoples and external powers, an issue that is of near-universal importance in archaeology. For those archaeologists working in regions that

1 A sample of recent approaches to North African funerary monuments can be found in Trousset 1995.

2 For a recent discussion of 'landscapes' in archaeology, see Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 1–30.

3 On the history of the Berber peoples during the last 3000 years, see Brett and Fentress 1996; Camps 1980.

had direct connections with North Africa in antiquity, there are additional reasons to examine the essays in this book. Near Eastern archaeologists can explore how Punic tombs set that culture apart from local North African peoples and vice versa. Seeing how the trappings of Hellenistic ruler cults were adopted in North Africa will be of interest to those researching the Greek and Hellenistic worlds. A Roman or Byzantine archaeologist will be able to examine how symbols associated with the Roman empire or Christianity were utilized selectively in North Africa. The focus of this book necessitates a concentration on North Africa, although it may be profitable to examine the issue of mortuary landscapes in a wider geographical context such as the entire western Mediterranean. By limiting our focus to North Africa we believe that we can better concentrate on demonstrating the particularities of African landscapes in our period. We would nonetheless like to see North African topics more regularly integrated in studies of larger areas: North African studies do not regularly appear in recent volumes dedicated to the Roman west, for example.[4]

Since this book addresses a wide audience, we think it important to characterize the extensive research that has been devoted to landscapes and cemeteries in North Africa in this introduction.[5] Rather than considering individual projects, which would be impossible to do briefly, we focus here on the evolution of research methodologies for each topic. We also address the evolution of thinking about 'mortuary landscapes,' a field that has developed more recently. Next we consider a thematic discussion of mortuary landscapes in North Africa, describing some of the features particular to this region. In doing so we summarize the chapters of this book while drawing on other evidence from North Africa to provide a larger context for the individual chapters in the volume.

## Landscape Archaeology in North Africa

Landscape archaeology has a long and distinguished history in North Africa beginning with the French archaeologists, soldiers, and topographers who undertook wide-ranging surveys of the countryside in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco French officials performed and sponsored these surveys on behalf of their government, which wanted to conduct a thorough evaluation of the resources in its newly conquered territories; the process began later in Libya. Archaeology

4 Pearce, Millett, and Struck 2001; Blagg and Millett 1990.

5 For a recent overview of archaeological research in North Africa more generally, see Mattingly and Hitchner 1995.

regularly served the interests of the French and Italian colonial regimes in this era.[6] Teams assessed the potential reuse of ancient rural sites such as aqueducts, farms, roads, and military garrisons. They gave papers about the results of their inquiries to local scientific and historical societies; some of these studies were published as articles, and in a few instances as books. Possibly the most important publications they produced were the archaeological atlases of Algeria and Tunisia, which achieved new levels of precision in site recording.[7] Individual sheets of each atlas plotted sites in a 20 by 30 km region at the scale of 1:50,000; all known archaeological sites were located on the map and major ones described with accompanying drawings and explanatory text. This was a thorough assessment of the rural landscape for its time, even though many of these sites were no more than 'dots on maps,' smaller sites were inevitably overlooked, and the quality of record-keeping for the individual sheets varied tremendously.

Between about 1910 and 1970 excavations heavily outnumbered landscape studies in North Africa, although the latter were not discontinued entirely. The introduction of aerial photography after the First World War facilitated the study of frontier establishments, road networks, and agricultural exploitation. By this time research largely served scholarly rather than imperial purposes. Jean Baradez (1949) delineated frontier systems such as the *fossatum Africae* in Algeria with its attendant forts and watchtowers. In Tunisia, André Caillemer and Raymond Chevallier (1959) built upon Charles Saumagne's (1952) studies of aerial photographs to create the *Atlas des centuriations de la Tunisie*. More recently, Pol Trousset (1977) and Pierre Morizot (1998) have carried on the use of aerial photography in examinations of frontiers and agriculture in both countries. The arid landscapes of the North African interior have proved particularly susceptible to aerial photography, which has revealed extensive rural territories subdivided for agricultural production and tax purposes.

During the last thirty years landscape studies have greatly increased in North Africa. Two influential projects began in Algeria and Libya in the 1970s (although otherwise few surveys have occurred in these two countries and Morocco). The Caesarea Survey (Algeria) found that the plains and valleys immediately around the town contained villas and other rural sites heavily influenced by Roman occupation. Productive facilities characterized many of the rural settlements, with only three villas functioning

6 On the historiography of nineteenth-century French colonial investigations in North Africa, see Dondin-Payre 1994; P.-A. Février 1986; Mattingly 1996. On Libya, see Munzi 2001.

7 Algeria: Gsell 1911. Tunisia: Babelon et al. 1892–1913; Cagnat et al. 1914–32.

primarily as luxurious dwellings.[8] In the Libyan pre-desert, the UNESCO Libyan Valleys Survey documented settlements utilizing indigenous floodwater farming techniques in order to grow crops in wadi drainage channels.[9] The settlements and intensive cultivation of wadi floors dated primarily to the Roman period (second to fourth century C.E.). More recently, many new investigations have taken place in Tunisia, where a government program to inventory all archaeological sites has advanced quickly.[10] A number of other surveys in Tunisia have adopted a more intensive and systematic approach, encouraged by the success of regional archaeological projects in the northern Mediterranean that have combined closely spaced field-walking with a range of spatial, environmental, geophysical, and other techniques. This attempt to understand landscapes was influenced by processual archaeology, an approach that seeks to develop hypotheses that can be tested through structured, multidisciplinary research. This influence continues to inform many North African survey projects today.

## Cemetery Archaeology in North Africa

Cemetery archaeology dates back for more than a century in North Africa (fig. 1.2).[11] In the late nineteenth century, French scholars and military officials in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia excavated at many cemeteries with the goal of finding inscriptions and grave goods such as coins or terracotta figurines. Cemeteries at Timgad, Tiddis, and Haïdra, to name three, yielded vast numbers of inscriptions, which in turn were scrutinized for information on the movement of garrisons, the function of colonies, and the interaction of Roman and non-Roman citizens.[12] One of the most famous assemblages was found in Carthage at the Cemetery of the Officials. A network of subterranean tunnels allowed the site to be literally mined for inscriptions before the open-area excavations of Père A.-L. Delattre.[13] In other cases, excavations were conducted at cemeteries near military bases. The headquarters of a division of French riflemen, the Quatrième

8 Leveau 1984.

9 Barker et al. 1996.

10 Sadok Ben Baaziz (1992) outlines the project, which has a large number of publications to date.

11 MacKinnon (this volume) also discusses this subject while providing a detailed analysis of human osteological studies in North Africa.

12 Funerary inscriptions continue to be an important resource for studies of ancient demography and social history; a few examples include Lassère 1977; Saller and Shaw 1984; Cherry 1998.

13 Described by Gauckler 1895: 84.

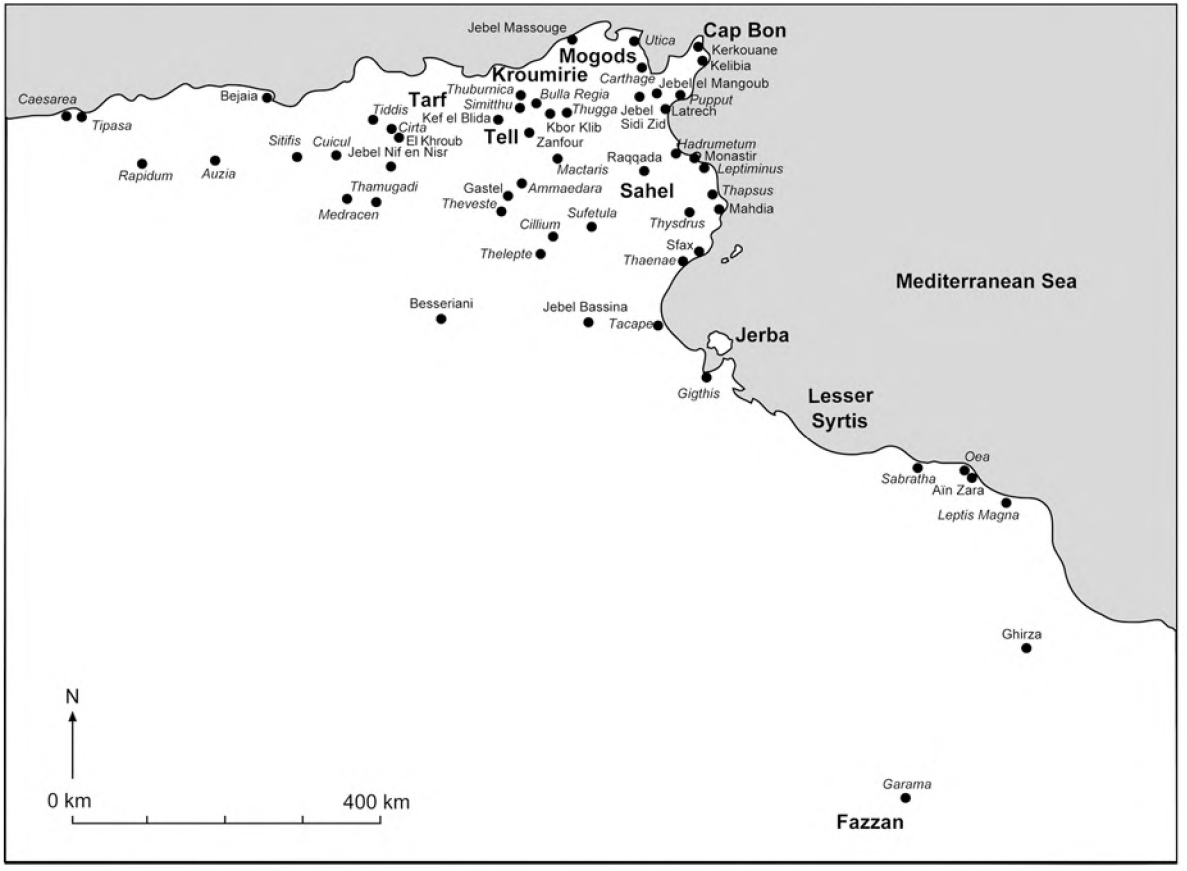


Figure 1.2 Map of North Africa showing major sites discussed in the volume (J. Gordon)

Tirailleurs Algériennes, was located on top of a major Roman cemetery at the west of the city of Sousse, so excavations became a leisure-time activity of the officers.[14] Another widespread interest for European archaeologists was Christian basilicas and their affiliated cemeteries. The White Fathers undertook many excavations at Carthage looking for traces of famous Christians such as the martyrs Perpetua, Felicitas, and Cyprian. Exploration in Punic cemeteries focused on grave goods and ritual practices, for instance in work by Paul Gauckler or the University of Michigan in Carthage.[15] Synthetic publications concentrated on typologies of funeral monuments, especially the more grandiose ones.[16]

Cemeteries received comparatively less attention in the colonial archaeology of Libya during Italian rule in the first half of the twentieth century. Here too excavation and restoration of Roman ruins played a role in supporting the ideology of the colonial regime. Archaeologists especially focused on the major urban centres and their monumental, sculpture-rich buildings, some with specific imperial patronage.[17] Cemeteries do not feature frequently in the publications of this era, though an exception is a fifth-century Christian cemetery at Aïn Zara.[18] By contrast, Punic hypogea discovered under the theatre at Leptis Magna in campaigns of 1938 to 1940 were mentioned briefly at the time, but were not published fully until 1977.[19] Anthropologists on an expedition to Fazzan in 1933–34 analysed skeletons from the necropolis of Garama (capital of the Garamantian empire) and concluded that they belonged to a Mediterranean people, an interpretation that sat well with colonial rule.[20]

During this time archaeologists were primarily interested in identifying the material traces of specific peoples (i.e., ethnic groups) and examining diffusion, contact, and acculturation on the basis of artefact distribution.

14 The garrison at Sfax was situated near the ruins of Thaenae; thus, part of that cemetery is published in an article entitled 'Fouilles du champ de manoeuvre de Sfax' (Barrier and Benson 1908). These articles are easy to recognize because officers usually included their rank when publishing archaeological reports.

15 Gauckler 1915; Harden 1927, 1937; Kelsey 1926.

16 Cagnat 1885; Saladin 1887; Gsell 1901. A number of scholars use this approach today (e.g., Bénichou-Safar 1982; Fantar 2002).

17 Munzi 2001. Spurred by the remains of olive presses in the pre-desert, there was also heightened interest in ancient agriculture and economic management, perceived as Roman colonial achievements: Munzi 2001: 41–46. See also Barker et al. 1996.

18 Aurigemma 1932.

19 De Miro and Fiorentini 1977.

20 Munzi 2001: 69–71. Further cemetery publications from Libya include Di Vita and Brecciaroli Taborelli 1975; Brecciaroli Taborelli 1983; Di Vita-Evrard, Fontana, and Musso 1995; Musso 1997; Fontana 2001; Bessi 2002.

Historians of the discipline of archaeology term this the 'culture-history' phase (Trigger 1989: 148–206). The artefacts from a cemetery excavation, for example, were first sorted into types, with the emphasis on combinations of types as characteristic of certain peoples. The distribution of these types was plotted on a map, and the excavators often concluded that the extent of distribution equalled the diffusion of the culture. Thus, for example, where literary sources were absent, the spread of Punic civilization or Christianity was determined by artefacts present in cemeteries and cemetery churches. The culture-history approach of the nineteenth and early twentieth century focused mostly on inscriptions, grave goods, and funerary architecture, with variable attention also given to grave orientation and type of disposal (cremation or inhumation) as markers of ethnicity. Questions of social status or topography received less attention, and human remains and poorer graves practically none at all. Excavators focused on creating typologies of tombs rather than on recording details of individual graves. Grave goods are likewise usually discussed en masse, without reference to specific burials. Though these publications sometimes provide evocative photographs or drawings of funerary monuments, they seldom incorporate the landscape into discussions of cemeteries.

As new developments in methods and theory swept archaeology during the second half of the twentieth century, excavators of North African cemeteries began to operate in a more systematic fashion, make greater use of interdisciplinary collaboration, and emphasize scientific knowledge. The early years of this period saw the commencement of projects aimed at cemeteries in Cherchel, Tipasa, Sétif, Raqqada, and elsewhere.[21] These projects publish details about each grave encountered, including drawings or photographs of the skeletons, description of the fill, details about grave goods, even modest ones, and profiles of pottery. At this time archaeologists with training in scientific techniques also began to be more frequently involved with North African projects. For instance, a radiocarbon sample from the Medracen tomb in Algeria provided a date of ca 320 B.C.E. (fig. 1.3).[22] In the 1970s it became standard for many archaeological teams involved in the UNESCO Campaign to Save Carthage to have an osteologist as part of the team. Cemetery archaeology continues in North Africa today, with a number of cemeteries under field investigation or study at a large number of sites across the Maghreb.

21 For instance, Leveau 1971–74; Lancel 1962–65; 1970; Bouchenaki 1975; Février and Guéry 1980; Guéry 1985; Mahjoubi, Salomonson, and Ennabli 1970.

22 Camps 1973.

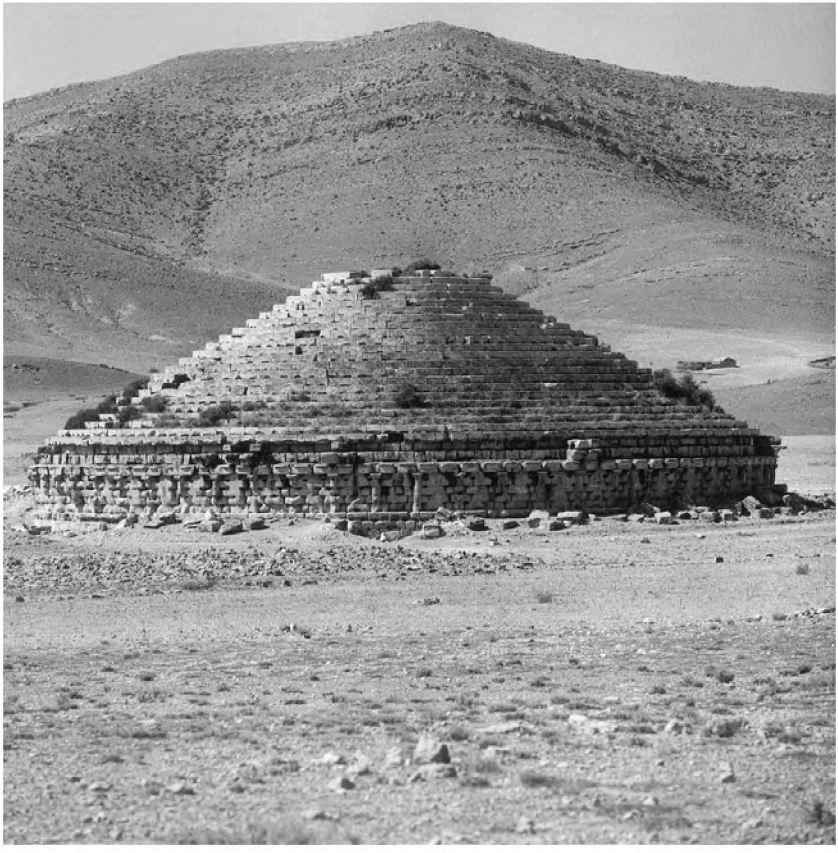

Figure 1.3 Tomb at Medracen, Algeria (Photo Eisner. DAIR Inst. Neg. 1971.2353, by permission)

## The Archaeology of Mortuary Landscapes

The placement of cemeteries is one of the most conspicuous human acts. For this reason, archaeologists have long recognized that it regularly serves functions beyond the expedient disposal of a corpse. This conclusion has been reaffirmed by ethnographic studies which indicate that modern societies position their cemeteries for reasons of social, religious, economic, and cosmological significance, among others.[23]

23 A recent summary of approaches to mortuary landscapes can be found in Parker Pearson 1999: 124–41.

A standard archaeological approach to this 'placing of the dead' has been to inquire where cemeteries were located. Did people locate cemeteries in sacred space? Did they locate the dead in places where they would be noticed and commemorated? Or did they locate the dead in places that marked territorial boundaries or denoted important private or community areas? A corollary approach investigates how and why the choice of burial location changed over time.

As a result of the interest in regional studies that developed in the second half of the twentieth century with processual archaeology, many archaeologists have paid greater attention to the study of landscapes. Megaliths, more than any other type of tomb, have encouraged processual examinations of mortuary landscapes. The best-known example of this may be Colin Renfrew's (1976) investigation of European megalithic tombs. Renfrew recognized that the tombs originated in several parts of Europe at the time of the first farming communities. He examined the location of megaliths on the island of Arran off Scotland and calculated distances between the tombs. Using these figures, he suggested that the tombs marked the territory of early farming groups and symbolized the right of descendants to occupy neighbouring land for generations afterward. Renfrew's model fit well with an earlier argument of Arthur Saxe (1970: 119–21), who stated (in abbreviated form) that groups use cemeteries to legitimize access to vital resources. Both Renfrew's and Saxe's models have subsequently been analysed and refined by Bob Chapman, Lynne Goldstein, and Doug Charles, as well as others. One refinement has suggested that hunter-gatherer and pastoral societies do not utilize cemeteries to legitimize their rights to resources as sedentary agriculturalists do. Another modification has proposed that past societies may express territoriality with greater or lesser degrees of visibility.[24] These studies have for the most part agreed with the processual conclusions of Renfrew that emphasized the territorial or economic concerns behind the construction of funerary monuments. Recently, megaliths have provided a means for the critique of these assessments, particularly as they relate to pre-state societies. Chris Tilley (1993, 1994) has suggested that monumental tombs may instead indicate how landscapes are perceived or experienced by contemporary inhabitants. Tilley cites examples of megaliths in Sweden and Wales whose different superimposed stones mimic the geological layers of their surroundings, or whose alignment directed contemporary viewers to important landscape features such as mountains and rivers. He argues that societies used the tombs to demarcate landmarks, orientation points, and paths of movement. In so doing,

24 Chapman 1981, 1995; Charles 1995; Goldstein 1981.

megaliths may demonstrate the mythological beliefs or cosmological ideas of their builders rather than a preoccupation with power and ideology.

These adjustments and critiques of the models proposed by Renfrew and Saxe have increased the interpretative possibilities for the construction of megaliths, although many archaeologists today do not dispute the view that tomb building and territorial behaviour are often related. What we are left with at the moment in archaeology is a concept of mortuary landscapes that is expanding to include a range of theoretical stances and levels of social organization. This concept has been a critical part of recent debates in archaeology. We hope that the present discussion of North African mortuary landscapes may provide evidence to contribute to this debate from the consideration of several case studies.

## North African Mortuary Landscapes

Our goal for this book is to stimulate consideration of the topic of mortuary landscapes by examining those of a broad spectrum of the major civilizations in ancient North Africa: Garamantian, Berber, Punic, Roman, and Early Christian. We invited authors working on cemetery studies to contribute articles concerning a number of different regions and time periods in North Africa. Although individual papers focus on different eras, regions, and political powers, they are unified by several common themes. We will elucidate a number of these common themes in the rest of this chapter and, since discussion of mortuary landscapes has not extensively addressed North Africa, will suggest further ways in which we envision the topic developing. Landscape, as the setting that humans inhabited and acted upon according to their needs and wishes, is regularly a place where people organize themselves in communities, acquire resources, worship, and commemorate important places or items so that they will not be forgotten. Over generations these activities leave behind indications of how people have interacted with their environment. We have grouped these behaviours, as they relate to burials and funerary monuments, under the rubrics of landscapes of change, continuity, identity, community, and the sacred.

## Landscapes of Change

One of the reasons why landscape studies have become a standard form of archaeological inquiry is that landscapes contain information about activities that are visible over the long term. With several successive empires controlling its territory during the time span covered by this book

(700 B.C.E. to 700 C.E.), North Africa presents an ideal location for such long-term analyses. To ask how we can write long-term narratives of encounter and cultural change in North Africa is to take an important step in studying this region, as such projects have rarely been attempted. In this volume we begin the process, though we readily admit that the final versions of such narratives should not be written on the basis of funerary monuments alone, but from studies grounded in a wider range of evidence. Three of the most important changes that affected North Africa in the period of more than a millennium covered by this volume nonetheless appear clearly from mortuary evidence. These changes may be broadly characterized as influence from east Mediterranean peoples (Phoenicians, Greeks, Egyptians), incorporation into the Roman empire, and the spread of Christianity. Tombs provide a venue for examining these cultural and political changes not just through grave goods (the focus of many previous studies), but also through aspects of their architectural design, burial practices, and relationship to the landscape.

Connections with the east led directly to the growth of the earliest North African states and the creation of new mortuary landscapes. Carthage, a Phoenician colony of the eighth century B.C.E., became the first North African state, and within a few generations kingdoms spread across North Africa in an example of secondary state formation. Friedrich Rakob (1979, 1983), Filippo Coarelli and Yvon Thébert (Coarelli and Thébert 1988) have argued that the emerging royalty of the new kingdoms chose to demonstrate their power through the construction of large and elaborate tower-mausolea in the vicinity of major settlements.[25] These mausolea demonstrate the importance of connections to Carthage and beyond in that they are in several respects modelled after the styles of eastern Mediterranean royal tombs. Three of our case studies provide good examples of other modifications to the landscape that had their roots in the influence from the east. Habib Ben Younes shows the interculturality of Punic tombs, which over time adopt elements of design and decoration from indigenous, Phoenician, and Hellenistic sources. As with Punic tombs and tower-mausolea, haouanet contain a mixture of local and foreign decorative motifs that enable us to examine how changes to the landscape were not made wholesale, but were incorporated into existing traditions. David Stone looks at these rock-cut tombs, which were much more common than tower-mausolea and provide an example of east Mediterranean influences absorbed by less powerful North Africans. Jennifer Moore's chapter consid-

25 Naïdé Ferchiou (1995: 124) and Jennifer Moore (this volume) have raised questions about this interpretation.

ers the longer-term impacts of east Mediterranean influences by focusing on tower-mausolea in the Roman period.

Evidence from tombs plays a key role in assessing changes brought about by incorporation into the Roman empire, the second phase of cultural change noted above. Tombs are the most common type of site recorded by field surveys in the pre-Roman landscape, but they became much less prominent as Rome exerted its influence over the countryside of North Africa. During the Roman period rural farming settlements and agricultural facilities characterize the landscape rather than tombs. Comparing the survey data from many regions, as David Stone has demonstrated elsewhere (2004), offers a picture of important transformations in landscape brought about by participation in a wider sphere of economic and cultural relations. Field survey evidence now forms one of the main bodies of data for the landscapes of North Africa. To this point, however, African survey projects have not extensively considered the place of funerary monuments within the landscape. We anticipate that the growth of survey evidence from North Africa will make studies of North African mortuary landscapes both possible and desirable in the future.

Two trends associated with imperial Rome are easily distinguished in the funerary landscapes of North Africa: the rise in epigraphy and the change in burial practice first from inhumation to cremation, and then back again to inhumation. The 'epigraphic habit' reached a zenith across the Roman Empire in the later second and third centuries C.E. and is especially well documented in North Africa. The use of epigraphy created an 'inscribed landscape' not only in the public spaces of North African towns, but in suburban and rural cemeteries as well. Elizabeth Meyer has persuasively linked the rise in cemetery epigraphy in North Africa to the advertisement of Roman citizenship (1990). In large suburban cemeteries, especially, inscriptions defined social hierarchies, kin groups, and citizenship. Such inscriptions advertised affiliations in a complex fashion, however, as Sergio Fontana has demonstrated at Leptis Magna (2001). With tower-mausolea interspersed with groups of single tombs, and commemorative inscriptions visible on many of the monuments, the cemeteries flanking this city had an appearance not dissimilar to those of many other cities in Roman North Africa. Throughout the first century C.E. most of the inscriptions were in Punic, however, with the Latin language and Roman nomenclature appearing much later in cemeteries than in public contexts. Furthermore, below the mausolea and single tombs was another tomb type less visible to the passer-by. The middle and upper classes of Leptis Magna continued to bury their dead in *hypogea*, subterranean rock-cut chambers containing numerous cremation urns, as their Punic ancestors had. Fontana demonstrates

that the Punic language remained in use on the urns after Leptis Magna became a colony in 109 C.E., an event that awarded Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants. Some hypogea even had Latin inscriptions on the exterior, with Punic ones on the urns inside the tomb; in other cases Latin letters transliterated Punic words. Thus, the 'Roman' appearance of these cemeteries at ground level was only one facet in an intricate web of landscape, epigraphy, and burial practices. In other cities with large numbers of excavated tombs, studies such as Fontana's would seem very promising.[26]

Before the Roman conquest, the inhabitants of North Africa regularly practised forms of inhumation, but the influence of Rome brought widespread adoption of cremation in the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E.[27] In the later second and third centuries C.E., again under the influence of Rome, North African residents preferred the practice of inhumation over cremation. In North Africa, however, it is not clear to what extent there was a break between inhuming in pre-Roman times and inhuming in the Roman period.[28] Ian Morris has argued that the western provinces, including those in North Africa, viewed inhumation as a 'Roman' feature, while at Rome itself it was probably regarded as a Greek custom (1992). Even if inhumation remained in continuous use in North Africa, what we likely can identify are broad – if not complete – changes in the funerary landscape brought on by a desire to emulate burial practices at Rome. Thus, in this book Lea Stirling speculates about links between the change to inhumation and the simultaneous popularity of cupula tombs, which could more easily protect an outstretched corpse. Her chapter indicates that the development of the cupula tomb is particular to the cross-currents of the second and third centuries and cannot be convincingly viewed as an extension of pre-Roman trends.

The third major change is the spread of Christianity, which created new sacred and civic landscapes. Christians built basilicas and bishops' palaces within cities, added martyrs' shrines, pilgrimage routes, and chapels to rural landscapes, and created new funerary landscapes and practices. Among the most important of the funerary changes are the acceptance of burial within the city limits and the placement of cemeteries beneath the floors of basilicas. Anna Leone investigates intramural burials not placed in cemetery churches, stressing the use of the landscape to create Christian public spaces. She suggests that even those who could not afford graves within basilicas advertised Christian identity and modified urban landscapes

26 For instance, Bessi 2002.
27 Camps 2001.
28 P.-A. Février 1992.

by placing burials around sacred spots within late-antique cities. This desire to locate the dead near sacred spaces stresses how early Christians created new mortuary landscapes that expressed their own religious identities.

## Landscapes of Continuity

How much did the contact with the East, Roman conquest, and the arrival of Christianity, the three sources of cultural influence described above, really transform North African societies from 700 B.C.E. to 700 C.E.? A number of scholars have argued that over this long period of time, the underlying strata of North Africa remained indigenous in character, despite being covered by a veneer of foreign influence. This idea of an immutable North African society is sometimes referred to as 'la permanence Berbère.' Although these scholars have cited language, technology, religion, and political institutions to draw attention to the continuity of Berber lifestyles, the idea might also apply to mortuary landscapes and funerary practices.[29] Fontana's study of tombs with Latin inscriptions above ground and Punic inscriptions below comes to mind as a means of identifying continuity in funerary landscapes.[30] Likewise, the consistent emphasis on ancestor worship in North African tombs (discussed below under Landscapes of the Sacred) provides an example of continuity over the long term.

David Mattingly's chapter identifies components of an 'African way of death' in the burial practices of the Garamantes. While Garamantian tombs borrowed from Egyptian, Greek, and Roman monuments in design (architectural elements like pyramids) and in contents (drinking paraphernalia), they employed a limited range of foreign material culture. Many aspects of Garamantian funerary rituals (crouched inhumations, the presence of red ochre, headrests, beads and necklaces, and wrappings of leather, cloth, or matting) remained in use from the end of the Neolithic to the late Roman periods. Mattingly therefore concludes that a unique Garamantian funerary culture came together in Fazzan and remained in existence throughout our period. This is precisely the sort of mortuary landscape that one might associate with Berber continuity.

The study of human bones provides a different avenue for examining change or continuity in population and culture over time. Michael MacKinnon's analysis of inhumed skeletal material from a variety of sites, the first such examination carried out with data from North Africa, finds more evidence for continuity than change in the recordable traits of humans

29 Bénabou 1976; Courtois 1955; Whittaker 1978.
30 Fontana 2001.

inhabiting these landscapes. While expressing due caution for the admittedly limited and uneven pool of data, he observes that most features, such as positioning, orientation, and sex ratios, are roughly the same in Punic, Roman, and Byzantine times. Ratios of children to adults vary considerably among the different cemeteries but, rather than demonstrating different levels of infant mortality, this may reflect the use of separate burial areas for children in some places. One possible variation over time may come in skeletal size: the average heights from the Punic samples are somewhat shorter than later periods.

## Landscapes of Identity

Several authors in this book choose to study large assemblages of tombs in their analysis of a mortuary landscape. This approach allows large-scale patterns to stand out, and the authors use these patterns to indicate how a multitude of individual structures can reveal 'social geographies.' As Gabriel Camps (1961: 53–54) first noted, such spatial patterning is clearly visible in the contemporaneous 'land of dolmens,' 'land of haouanet,' and 'land of tumuli' that occupy reasonably distinct territories in North Africa. More recently, Jörg Kleemann (2002) has shown that only a small number of graves of the Vandal period contain any evidence for the presence of ethnic Germans in North Africa. In the present volume, David Stone investigates how haouanet may have demarcated the territories of indigenous inhabitants in an era when these regions were coming under increasing foreign control by the Numidian kingdoms, then Carthage, and later Rome. Haouanet, along with megaliths and rock-cut Phoenician and Punic tombs, form the basis of Habib Ben Younes's discussion of interculturalism and ethnicity in the Punic funerary world. Examining architecture, furnishings, and decoration, he shows how indigenous practices influenced Phoenician usages and created a blended Libyo-Phoenician (or Punic) tradition. These landscapes clearly offer the possibility for multiple interpretations. Thus, while Stone suggests the Libyan builders of the haouanet created a landscape of protest, Ben Younes argues that the haouanet became part of a landscape of acculturation when imported to the Punic funerary tradition.

On the one hand, the location or choice of tomb type distinguished group identities, and on the other, individual inhabitants of ancient North Africa at times expressed their identity, be that ethnicity, class, or religious affiliation, through funerary structures. An extraordinary example of this phenomenon is the group of elaborate mausolea associated with the royalty of the Numidian kingdoms. These mausolea, such as the one at Medracen (fig. 1.3), make a significant break with later prehistoric tombs

in their desire to assert the prominence of the individual they commemorate. In the mausolea, this individual is almost always identified with the traditions of rulers of the contemporary Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean as well as those of North Africa. Mattingly presents new research on the mortuary landscapes of the Garamantes, another place where multiple traditions were united. While acknowledging elements borrowed from Egyptian and Greco-Roman practices, he focuses on identifying specifically African characteristics in the mortuary traditions of this central Saharan kingdom. Mattingly's chapter demonstrates how indigenous groups did not simply accept the symbols of external groups as their identities, but negotiated which aspects they wanted to incorporate while retaining elements of their own culture.

In Roman Africa, argues Jennifer Moore, a 'mausoleum culture' united the wealthiest inhabitants and these funerary monuments symbolized their dominance of the landscape. Tower-mausolea stemmed from a pre-Roman tradition, and the earliest Roman examples continued previous patterns in decoration and in design. Later tower- and temple-mausolea blended the pre-existing shape with Roman-style inscriptions, poems, and banquet scenes to present the deceased as a member of both Roman and African cultures.

Lea Stirling also examines how Roman tombs played a role in marking social relationships and rivalries in the landscape. Within crowded suburban cemeteries cupula tombs marked the passing of individuals with inscriptions, decoration or offerings. Since they were often situated in groups but adjacent to more prominent tombs (such as mausolea, whose stepped appearance they imitated, though on a smaller scale), they simultaneously formed part of a funerary landscape that indicated family groupings as well as hierarchical social relationships. That cemeteries of the Roman era afforded such a range of choices to members of all social classes is also noteworthy, and reflects the needs of a society composed of many complex hierarchies of birth, wealth, and citizenship, to name only the major sliding scales.[31]

## Landscapes of Community

Ann Marie Yasin (2005) has recently considered cemetery churches as a space made sacred for the Christian community of North African towns. The creation of this space reinforces the desire of the Church to situate Christian cults in basilicas, and to direct worship away from tombs, which

31 Nicholas Purcell emphasizes the range of funerary choice at all levels of society in the city of Rome (1987: 35).

Figure 1.4 Tophet at Carthage (photo L. Stirling)

had long been revered as sources of spiritual power. Yasin describes how the orderly rows of graves memorialized the deceased as a community, rather than emphasizing the memory of a specific person. In this book, Anna Leone demonstrates that the introduction of new funerary landscapes provided an opportunity for the articulation of an entire religious community's identity. Individuals sought burial near sacred structures in order to associate themselves with the Christian community, even if this required their entombment within city limits. We see here how mortuary practices can often serve as a prime means by which ancient communities expressed their group values, with tombs serving as the material representation of these identities and marking a physical presence in a territory.

Archaeology has much to teach us about the ways in which North African peoples united as communities in the past. The tophet of Carthage presents a well-known example of a mortuary landscape through which the dead were linked by several common traits: incineration, age from infancy to four years, and use of a stele as a surface marker for the burial. It is not necessary to enter the debate about whether or not these burials represent the victims of a sacrifice to the god Baal Hammon.[32] The choice to bury these children in the same cemetery, with the same mor-

32 A summary of the investigations at the tophet can be found in Brown 1991 and Lancel 1995: 227–56. Bénichou-Safar (1995) contains an argument against the child sacrifices.

tuary practices, indicates that the tophet was a mortuary landscape that memorialized the dead as a community (fig. 1.4). Cemeteries for children formed communities in Roman-period towns as well. Latifa Slim's excavations have drawn attention to one of these in Thysdrus with several hundred burials for children aged from infancy to about fifteen years.[33] Naomi Norman has recently argued that children were conceptualized very differently from adults in Roman Africa on the basis of evidence for the use of Punic rather than Roman grave goods and the placement of burials near monuments that evoke local memories.[34] If Norman is correct in her interpretations, we could indeed see how cemeteries for children reveal quite striking patterns in the mortuary landscapes of Roman Africa.

Lea Stirling discusses cupulae as Roman-period burial monuments that could also demonstrate community. Within a single cemetery, the fields of cupulae are usually neither the wealthiest burial monuments (mausolea) nor the poorest (amphorae or pits) in the cemetery. They generally indicate that those buried below were persons of moderate means. While cupulae became one of the normative tomb types of North Africa in the imperial period, there were regional signatures in their form, use, and location. In the cemetery of Hadrumetum, cupulae could send different messages depending on their relationship with hypogea. Above-ground cupulae clustered around the entrances to hypogea, incorporating them into the largely undifferentiated community on the surface. Below ground, some chambers of hypogea contained further cupulae. The subterranean cupulae were prominently placed on visual axes where they would be noticed ahead of loculus graves in the walls, and many were further emphasized by decoration, often floral. On the surface, then, cupulae played a normative, equalizing role in the Hadrumetum cemetery, being a medium rank of tomb in the overall scale. Below ground, cupulae could become focal points themselves, outdoing other burials in elaboration.

## Landscapes of the Sacred

North Africans, like the inhabitants of many other parts of the world, worshipped at the tombs of their ancestors. A wide range of evidence attests to these practices throughout the periods considered in this book. The earliest indication of ancestor worship derives from the fifth-century Greek author Herodotos, who states that the Nasamones 'swear by the graves of the men reputed to have been the most just and good' and

33 Slim 1983.
34 Norman 203: 45.

practised divination at their ancestors' tombs (4.172.3). Pomponius Mela, writing in the first century C.E., reiterates that the Augilae slept in the tombs of their ancestors and interpreted their dreams as responses from the dead concerning the proper course of action (1.8.45). As Gabriel Camps has pointed out,[35] the construction of rooms attached to funerary monuments in the northern Sahara can best be explained as an attempt to provision these tombs with sleeping quarters.

Another aspect of ancestor worship involved the deposition of ritual offerings for the dead at the site of the grave. Tomb structures and iconography related to such offerings are frequently found throughout North Africa. David Mattingly argues that the use of offering tables and their attendant rituals may be indigenous to Africa rather than foreign in origin because they are present in early Garamantian cemeteries as well as later ones in which the influence of external economic interactions can be seen.

The tomb architecture of Roman Africa often made clear reference to sacred activity and offerings to the dead. Thus, in early Roman times, altar-shaped tombs were popular. Many types of tomb marker such as the cupulae discussed by Stirling frequently incorporated low offering tables, libation tubes, or both. While such architecture, along with literary, epigraphic, and iconographic evidence, indicates ritual activity concerning offerings and dining in the cemetery, archaeological evidence for the offerings themselves has not usually been well recorded. Tipasa in Algeria is a rare site where animal bones and seeds are regularly reported; here murex shells and horse and pig bones found on the ground around tombs seem to be the remnants of offerings and ritual dining. Excavators also report pine nuts and olive pits.[36] Excavations at Leptiminus, the only North African site where there has been systematic recovery of seeds from graves, illustrate the potential for palaeobotany to shed light on ritual practices. Olive pits, grapes, figs, and pine nuts were identified in tombs. There are differing interpretations of these seeds and how they came to be in graves. On the one hand, they may have entered the tombs by accident as part of the normal cemetery fill.[37] Alternatively, they may be the remains of burned offerings deliberately cast in during funeral rites.[38] Flotation at further graves at Leptiminus suggests that there is indeed a distinctive pattern of grave offerings.[39]

35 Camps 1986: 163.
36 Lancel 1970: 164–66.
37 Smith 2001: 433.
38 Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 163–64.
39 Stirling et al. 2000; Stirling 2004.

Related to the practice of leaving food offerings to the dead was memorial banqueting at family graves, especially during the yearly festival of the Parentalia.[40] Such banquets provided an opportunity for ostentation and competition and were sometimes commemorated on the funeral monuments themselves. Moore draws attention to the advertisement in inscriptions and reliefs of lavish funerary banquets associated with mausolea. This important ritual maintained family connections across the divide of the living and the dead.

While Roman religion appears to have been fundamentally compatible with ancestor worship, Christian doctrine proved to be incompatible with the practice. St Augustine recounted the story of how his mother Monica ceased to bring offerings of food to the tombs of saints, as she was accustomed to do in Africa, when forbidden by a bishop (*Conf.* 6.2). Monica repented from her old habits immediately, but other North Africans did not abandon long-standing customs so easily. In a sermon to his parishioners, St Augustine criticized Donatists for worshipping at tombs in a manner that he regarded as wholly incompatible with Christian observances:

> They [the Donatists] who gather up the bodies of those who have committed suicide by throwing themselves off precipices are dangerous murderers. They consecrate the blood of these individuals. They venerate their tombs and become intoxicated at these sepulchres. Some, seeing how these people who have committed suicide are honoured become impassioned with the same desire, some get drunk with wine at the tombs and others with anger and more serious rage. (*Serm. Guelf.* 28.5)[41]

Although Augustine's description of Donatist rituals may have tended towards hyperbole, the discovery at Jebel Nif en-Nisr in Algeria of sixty-five stones below a cliff bearing the names of individuals followed by *nat*[*alicia*] or *red*[*ditio*], presumably in reference to eternal rebirth or the ransom of the soul, suggests that some elements of his commentary may be accurate.[42] His remarks nonetheless indicate that the Christian church had difficulty eradicating some of the long-standing practices of ancestor

40 Toynbee 1971: 63–65.

41 'Illi sunt homicidae ampliores, qui corpora praecipitatorum cum honore colligunt, qui praecipitatorum sanguinem excipiunt, qui eorum sepulchrum honorant, qui ad eorum tumulos se inebriant. Illi enim videntes huiusmodi honorem praeberi praecipitatis, inflammantur alii ad praecipitium, illi super eos inebriantur vino, illi inebriantur furore et errore pessimo.'

42 Leschi 1940; Logeart 1940; Berthier, Martin, and Logeart 1942.

worship in North Africa.[43] Anna Leone considers the development of new funerary landscapes that broke with earlier traditions during the Christian period. She focuses on intramural burial in late-antique cities of North Africa, examining graves inserted into former public or private buildings. Despite earlier prohibitions against the burial of individuals within a built-up urban environment, it now served the religious needs of the early Christian community to bury individuals in sacred areas of the urban landscape. This provided easy contact between the dead and the living. She demonstrates that, rather than being random, the distribution of such burials can be linked to the presence of Christian cult centres. Likewise, the adoption of cemetery churches reinforced the desire of the Church to situate Christian cults in basilicas, and to direct worship away from tombs, which had long been revered as sources of spiritual power.

As the meeting place for the living and the dead, cemeteries also existed as a sacred landscape in which humans practised witchcraft and magic. In Carthage and Hadrumetum, nineteenth-century excavators found lead 'curse tablets' (*defixionum tabellae*) alongside such offerings as coins, lamps, and animal bones inside libation tubes. Others were nailed onto tomb markers, or occasionally interred with the remains.[44] As the spells on the tablets aimed to coerce the spirits of the dead to carry out their bidding, it was necessary to place them in proximity to underworld spirits or at openings to the underworld; thus libation tubes (and graves generally) were ideal for this 'infernal postal system.'[45] Necromancy, the art of conjuring the dead to reveal the future or secrets about the present, was another magical practice carried out in cemeteries.

## Conclusions

The inhabitants of ancient North Africa recognized tombs as important features of their surroundings and encountered them in places they regularly frequented; such, for example, was the case at Jebel Massouge, where a neo-Punic inscription mentions a boundary marker placed near a tomb 240 stades away. This particular tomb may indeed have functioned for some time as a boundary marker itself.[46] Many other examples demonstrate the dramatic or symbolic placement of funerary monuments within

43 J.G. Février 1978.
44 Audollent 1904, nos. 213–61, 303, 272–95.
45 Heintz 1998: 338.
46 P.-A. Février 1957.

the landscape; one might cite the megalithic tumulus whose circular shape augments the natural hill at Jebel Bassina in Tunisia as a particularly clear example of this tendency,[47] or the well-known story of the Ara Philaeni, the altars that commemorated the sacrifice of two Carthaginian youths in order to establish the boundary between their city and Cyrene in an advantageous position.[48]

Tombs such as these make explicit the need to consider funerary monuments in their settings. Yet even though cemetery and landscape studies have been hallmarks of North African archaeology for more than a hundred years, the two areas of research have not been effectively combined. The authors in this volume have undertaken in the following chapters to introduce a landscape perspective to the study of North African cemeteries. They do so by examining several regions, cultures, and periods and by bringing together the two areas to offer a new way of examining some familiar categories of analysis. In this introductory essay we have sketched some points of commonality between the chapters: funerary monuments provide evidence for landscapes of change, continuity, identity, community, and the sacred throughout several periods. We hope that this book will provide a foundation for future studies exploring these issues in greater detail.

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47 Ferchiou 1987: 41.

48 Sallust (*Iug.* 59), Pliny (*HN* 5.4), and Strabo (3.5.6; 17.3.20) all mention this story.

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# 2

# Interculturality and the Punic Funerary World

*Habib Ben Younes*

What impact did intercultural exchange have on the pre-Roman funerary world? Both basins of the Mediterranean wash the shores of modern Tunisia; one coast looks east and the other west. This strategic position made it a practically obligatory stage in various exchanges from east to west and vice versa, with influences from the Sahara further enriching the human and cultural composition of this geographical region. It is not surprising, then, that the pre-Roman funerary landscape is correspondingly heterogeneous. Such variety necessitates investigation of the populations who lay behind the genesis of these diverse cemeteries. Only the Phoenicio-Punic populations have been identified, but did they constitute a population or a culture? There is current debate on this question. We know less about their predecessors, those who dug the rock-cut tombs most commonly known as *haouanet*, and who were the builders of the vast clusters of dolmens that cover a large part of Tunisian terrain. One speaks of a 'Libyan' population, but was it one entity or several, and what were its origins?[1] All these questions allow us to see more clearly the problem of the impact of intercultural exchange on the pre-Roman world, the more so because the necropoleis are entwined not just geographically but also chronologically.

Why would this phenomenon of intercultural exchange (or, to use a modern buzzword, interculturality) be most visible in the funerary realm? To quote Gabriel Camps, 'When it comes to corpses, people don't

1 Camps 1961: 29–44. This well-known archaeologist considers the problems and methods of North African protohistory and notably those of the formation of the Berber people. These remain important questions.

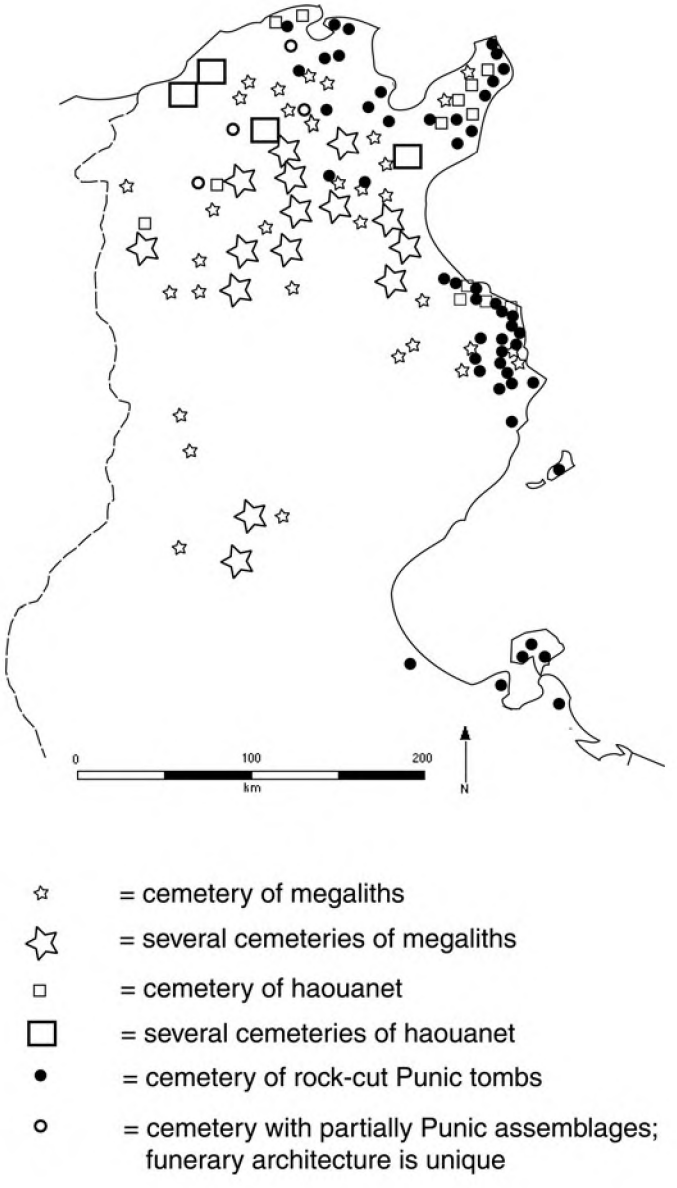


Figure 2.1 Distribution of pre-Roman cemeteries

innovate.'[2] While secular architecture evolved following fashion, taste, and the various currents of exchange, funerary architecture, governed by the evolution of beliefs, changed much more slowly. Therefore, we may be able to identify when a particular feature first appears in funerary architecture without being able to gauge the time span needed for the development of that feature.

## Three 'Families' of Tombs

Funerary architecture divides into three large 'families' (fig. 2.1). First, there are the megalithic tombs, whose typology, ranging from a simple dolmen to complex multi-roomed structures, simultaneously displays both simplicity and complexity.[3] Because of their geographical distribution, these tombs constitute the type that is most widespread in the Tunisian terrain. The establishment of the *Atlas préhistorique de la Tunisie* and the *Carte nationale des sites archéologiques et des monuments historiques* has noticeably enriched our knowledge of the megalithic landscape.[4]

The rock-cut tombs, better known in archaeological parlance as haouanet (though the terms *biban* and *ghorfa* are also used) form a 'family' characterized by a rich architectural and decorative repertoire.[5] The layout adopted in the planning of certain haouanets arranged in a row (El Harouri)[6] or opening onto a common esplanade illustrates the ingenuity of artisans confronted by difficult topography. This type of tomb, which sometimes houses furniture linked to particular types of grave (such as a funeral bed), is especially characterized by sculpted and painted decoration (fig. 2.2). The decorative repertoire allows us to distinguish its creators in relation to the other populations in ancient Tunisia. Nevertheless, even though it is possible to identify certain motifs particular to Phoenicio-Punic culture, they only constitute a tiny proportion of the total decoration. One must seek the sources of inspiration for the overall repertoire outside

2 'On n'innove pas pour un cadavre.' Ibid.: 461.

3 Camps 1961. See the *Encyclopédie berbère* for a recent view of the problems related to tombs connected with Libyan populations. For an example of one of the latest multi-chambered megalithic structures, see Ghaki 1997: 63–72.

4 Sections of the *Atlas préhistorique de la Tunisie* have been published since 1985 by the French School at Rome; portions of the *Carte nationale des sites archéologiques et des monuments historiques* have been published since 1998 by the Institut National du Patrimoine, Tunisia. Additional volumes of each series are currently in press and in preparation.

5 Camps and Longerstay 2000. These two authors discuss the 'state of the question' concerning haouanet.

6 Ghaki 1987: 229–51.

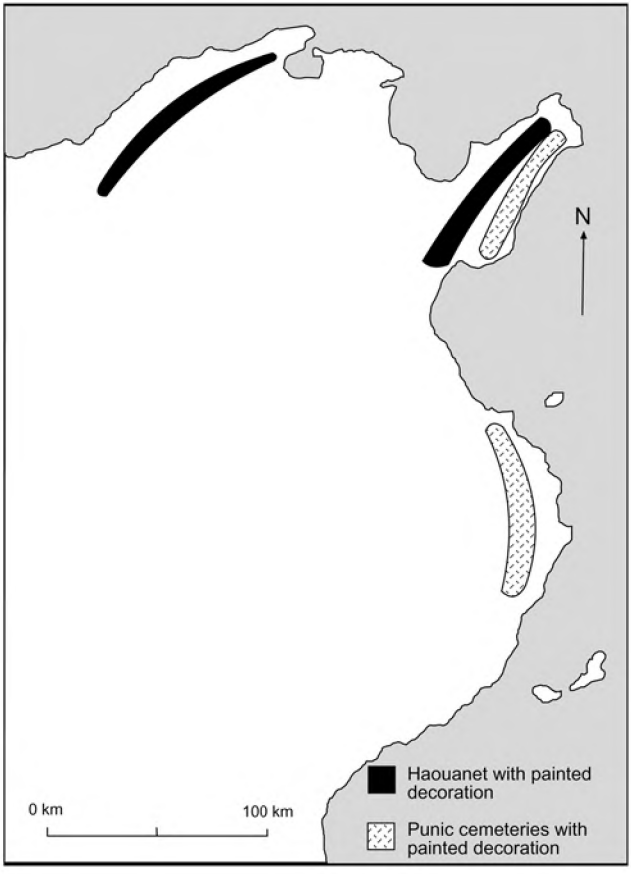


Figure 2.2 Distribution of haouanet and Punic cemeteries with painted decoration

Phoenician and Punic antecedents.[7] Haouanet are scattered over more than a third of Tunisian territory; their spread is thus narrower than that of the megaliths.

Finally, the third family is made up of shaft tombs in a Phoenicio-Punic tradition. Located mainly along the coasts, these necropoleis are rarer in the interior. Even so, these cemeteries divide into two groups whose architectural features both converge and diverge. Phoenician foundations, that is, sites such as Utica, Carthage, and Hadrumetum (Sousse) that were

7 See note 5.

founded by settlers from Phoenician cities in the east Mediterranean, form the first group. Funerary architecture at these sites seems to obey the same norms. The earliest tombs (Carthage and Utica), then later ones with a chamber dug laterally to the shaft, constitute an ensemble whose origins are connected to Phoenicia, a region rich in both eastern and Egyptian influence.

The second group of chamber tombs constitutes necropoleis at Punic sites, that is, sites such as Thapsus or Gigthis where indigenous populations (of Libyan origin) adopted and enriched Phoenician culture. The concern to protect the tomb by digging the burial chamber deep into the earth links the Punic and Phoenician necropoleis and distinguishes them from the other two 'families.' However, as will be discussed further below, there are differences between Phoenician and Punic architecture, including the size of the shaft, the means of descent, the shape of the funerary chamber, and the types of furnishings and grave goods. These important differences raise questions about origins.[8]

Thus, throughout the pre-Roman period, populations in this region simultaneously used three basic types of tombs, in accordance with their distant origins, their cultural traditions, and their religious beliefs. Which type came first? It is difficult to choose between the megalithic tombs and the haouanet. Of these two, it seems that the megalithic tombs survived for a longer time into the Roman period;[9] however, architecture of Punic tradition succeeded in remaining right into the first centruy B.C.E.[10] In any case, diversity of tombs, albeit diminished, continued throughout the Roman period.

## Phoenicio-Punic Shaft Tombs

What influence did the simultaneous presence of three 'families' with overlapping territories have on the funerary world? How much reciprocal influence is recognizable in this closed world? Though these questions merit the asking, they are not easily answered.

If we examine the Phoenicio-Punic funerary world, for instance, we see that this vast cultural area barely conceals considerable diversity. With the exception of various surface tombs not discussed here, Phoenicio-Punic tombs were subterranean. The present chapter concentrates on shaft tombs,

8 Ben Younes 1995a: 796–827. See pages 799–810 for the characteristics of funerary architecture of Phoenician and Punic sites in Tunisia.

9 For a tomb at Makthar, see Ghaki 1997: 72. The author states that this structure was used from the first half of the third century B.C.E. to the end of the first century C.E.

10 For instance, an unpublished tomb from the region of Mahdia, near Sidi Bennour, dating from the 1st century B.C.E.

a trademark element of this civilization. Concern for protecting the deceased led to an architecture that placed the burial chamber at a greater or lesser depth, with access being provided via a descending shaft.[11]

This common feature is significant, providing evidence that common beliefs are a relevant factor insofar as they could supply the only link between the funerary architecture of sites of Phoenician origin (Utica, Carthage, Hadrumetum) and all the other Punic sites (such as Kerkouane, Leptis, Thapsus, Gigthis). Commonality of beliefs, however, does not mean that all Punic sites display the same funerary architecture. The proportions and means of descent in the funerary shafts, the plans of multi-roomed tombs, the furniture related to funerary practices and modes of burial, and the decoration of the interior of the funeral chambers distinguish the tombs of the Phoenician sites from those of Punic sites.[12]

Let us recall that at sites of Phoenician origin one descends into the tomb by means of footholds cut in the walls of the shaft. In Punic tombs, the means of access varies regionally and with the depth of the shaft. For instance, in the cemeteries of Cap Bon, it is characteristic to find a staircase of small steps that occupies the whole width of the shaft and gives access to the dromos in front of the burial chamber. In the Sahel and in the Lesser Syrtis, by contrast, access to the landing of the shaft is provided by a staircase of small steps attached to one wall of the shaft, most often the left one. Thus, in contrast to the tombs of Cap Bon, those of the Sahel have a large open area where funeral ceremonies could take place.[13]

Phoenicio-Punic tombs are essentially single-roomed, with double- or multi-roomed tombs making up only a miniscule proportion of the cemeteries, as in Carthage. In Cap Bon, tombs are single-roomed. In the Sahel, multi-roomed tombs form a small minority. However, one should note that in the Sahel, single burial chambers surround a patio, giving the tomb the feel of a house with its courtyard and rooms. In Carthage, chambers superimposed in storeys create a more layered impression. Two plans, two perspectives, two styles – the Phoenician and the Punic – do not always correspond.

In the Sahel in particular, but also at Gigthis and Cap Bon, one frequently finds chambers with a domed ceiling (fig. 2.3, lower illustration). The burial chambers of Cap Bon or the Sahel could, to varying degrees, have a pitched ceiling imitating that of a cabin (fig. 2.4, lower illustration). Niches often had the same pitched top as the chamber did. The burial

11 Bénichou-Safar 1982: 105–27, 352–54.

12 See note 8.

13 See note 8.

chamber could be designed for receiving more than one corpse, as we see from the presence of two funeral beds, or a large, wide bed occupying more than two-thirds of the chamber.[14]

Cap Bon, the Sahel, and the Lesser Syrtis display the following furnishings: a funeral bed, sometimes with a pillow, a funeral bed with a mattress, small benches, sculpted sarcophagi, and plain sarcophagi. This varied, if infrequent, typology of carved features in the Punic tombs is completely absent from the necropoleis of the Phoenician sites. For instance, in the famous Punic necropolis at Carthage, where an exceptionally large number of tombs has been excavated, a plain sarcophagus at the rear of the chamber is the only type of furnishing provided for disposal of the corpse. Hélène Bénichou-Safar dates the Carthage examples to the beginning of the third century B.C.E.[15] Such uniformity in the method of disposal stands in striking contrast to the variety at Punic sites.

Finally, there is painted architectural decor on the walls of the burial chambers of the tombs of the Punic sites of Cap Bon and the Sahel. It is usually monochrome in red, but sometimes has blue as well. In both Cap Bon and the Sahel, there is simple figural decoration: zoomorphic (birds), floral (lotus flowers), and apotropaic (a hand). Still more elaborate scenes probably adorned the tombs of the Sahel.[16] For instance, the ceilings of some tombs carried decoration imitating the structure of a roof.[17] Note that this decor does not appear in cemetery sites of Phoenician origin.[18] The few examples of decorated tombs at Carthage, catalogued by Bénichou-Safar,[19] have no elements in common with the decoration of the Punic cemeteries.

Apart from the common feature of burying the funeral chamber deeply to protect it, the architecture and funerary decor of Phoenician and Punic populations are different. We are in the presence of two entities that express themselves differently in the conservative realm of funerary practice.

The Punic world itself, apart from the common features described above, presents regional characteristics. In the context of a single region, it is customary to delineate the differences, small but significant, between one site and another, between the coast and the interior. Thus, the interpretation may vary without annulling the common heritage.

14 Ben Younes 1995b. See the discussion and figures at pages 79–82.
15 Bénichou-Safar 1982: 354.
16 Ben Younes 1995a: 803 (Cap Bon), 805 (Sahel).
17 Ben Younes 1995b: 86–88 fig. 9.
18 Ben Younes 1995a: 86–88.
19 Bénichou-Safar 1982: 114, fig. 60; 163, fig. 92.

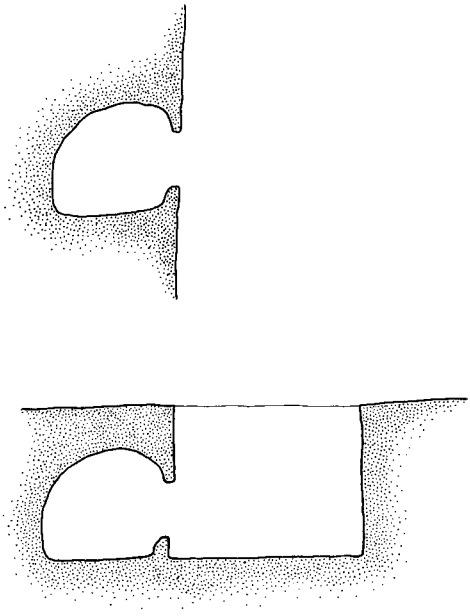

Figure 2.3 Hanout (above) and Punic shaft tomb (below) with domed ceilings (J. Heinrichs)

## Punic Tombs and Haouanet

The study of Punic funerary architecture cannot be carried out solely through comparison to Phoenician sites. We have briefly examined the differences that make them two almost completely distinct entities. Only comparison with the other 'families' of tombs makes it possible to clarify the real identity of Punic funerary architecture. Comparison with the built (rather than excavated) megalithic structures should not be dismissed, but new excavation and cleaning of ancient structures is necessary before it can be determined whether similarities exist. One must analyse the members of the other 'family,' the rock-cut haouanet, in the same way.

Cut into isolated outcrops or in the sides of hills and mountains like Punic tombs, haouanet had simple rectangular burial chambers, but also ones with a domed ceiling – the first similarity (fig. 2.3). Furnishings related to modes of disposal, though rare as in Punic tombs, are nevertheless similar. Low funeral beds, foot pillows, and funeral beds between the walls

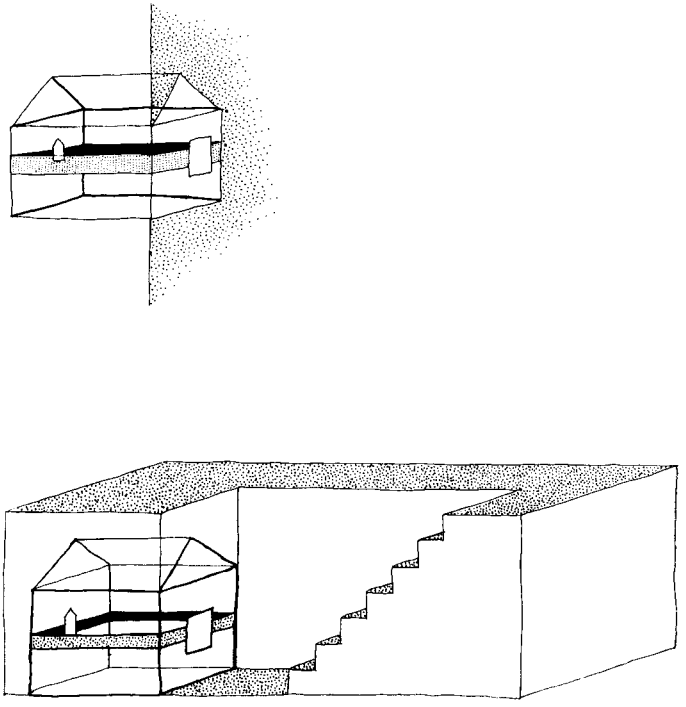

Figure 2.4 Hanout (above) and Punic shaft tomb (below) with pitched ceilings and painted decoration (J. Heinrichs)

have been found in both types of necropolis, most of the time located far apart, thus excluding any possibility of reciprocal influence.[20] For instance, the accessories identified in the haouanet of Jebel Sidi Zid near Zaghouan have parallels in the Punic necropolis of El Mansourah at Kélibia or that of Thapsus in the Sahel. Low funerary beds are found in the region of Dougga (the haouanet of Henchir Chett), but also in the Punic necropolis at Thapsus. These examples, which multiply when other furnishings are considered, show that one cannot speak of mutual influence between these distant populations, but rather of a common origin.

However, the repertoire of painted decoration on the walls of the burial chamber constitutes one of the most solid links between the builders of the

20 Ben Younes 1995a: 809–10.

haouanet and those of the Punic tombs. Use of a common visual tradition must indicate common origins. For instance, the employment of pitched ceilings or the imitation of a structure in certain haouanet is similar to the design of Punic tombs (fig. 2.4). Painted bands or fillets are arranged on the walls in a similar fashion to enhance the architectural décor. Other motifs vary according to the degree of Punicization of the population. Apart from architectural features, the iconographic repertoire of the haouanet encompasses motifs, such as representations of mausolea and the sign of Tanit, that are similar to those of Punic populations, but the haouanet are distinctive in using Mediterranean motifs unrelated to Phoenician cultures, thereby indicating, albeit unspecifically, the more distant origins of these populations.[21] Thus, the so-called Libyan funerary architecture of the haouanet and Punic funerary architecture make the same statement; the only difference lies in the burial of the Punic tombs deep into the earth.

The presence in Punic tombs of methods of burial no longer used by the Phoenicians at the time of their arrival in North Africa also shows the Libyan origin of the Punic populations. Thus, one finds inhumation in a fetal position, lateral inhumation, either flexed or straight, and an increased use of red ochre. These correspond more to the practices of Libyan populations, as does the rich repertoire of modelled pottery.[22]

## The Punic Funerary World

Bringing together several material traits for comparison can shed light on the ethnic origin of the Punic populations. The Punic population is in fact autochthonous, a Phoenicianized Libyan one, a Libyo-Phoenician one.[23] However, there is room for further study of the changeover from the haouanet and even the dolmen to the Punic tomb in certain regions, that is to say, the genesis of Punic funerary architecture in varying regions or in the sites of the same region. How much time was necessary for this funerary architecture to mature before it appeared in the way that it did in the cemeteries of Kerkouane, Leptis, or Thapsus? What was the amount of time necessary for the fusion of two cultures and two belief systems, Phoenician and Libyan, to arrive at a Punic culture in the funerary world? This question is hard to answer. At Kerkouane, Leptis, or Thapsus there are tombs going back to the fifth century B.C.E. They already have an

21 Ben Younes 1995b: 87–89. On the painted decoration of haouanet, see also Stone (this volume).

22 Ben Younes 1995a: 823–24.

23 Ben Younes 1995a: 820–24.

elaborate, mature funerary architecture, but we do not know what period of elaboration was necessary for it, nor whether it occurred in a uniform manner at all sites. It is clear that the coast was more exposed to Phoenician customs than the interior. As with all civilizing phenomena, there is a gap in time and space.

In conclusion, we are able to reaffirm the plurality of the pre-Roman funerary landscape; each of these 'families' had its own dynamic. The cross-influences between these families are the result of the cultural blending of the populations forming the inhabitants of Tunisia in the pre-Roman era. The Punic funerary world was the product of contact among successive Mediterranean cultural currents in Tunisia. Although we know the identity of one of these influences, Phoenician culture, we still have not identified the other influences that preceded the Phoenicians and left an impression on this African territory. The Punic funerary world therefore constitutes an intercultural Mediterranean phenomenon.

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# 3

# Monuments on the Margins: Interpreting the First Millennium B.C.E. Rock-cut Tombs (Haouanet) of North Africa

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## Developing an Approach to Haouanet

*Haouanet*, the square funerary chambers carved into prominent limestone escarpments in the northern Tunisian Tell and the interior of Cap Bon during the late first millennium B.C.E., have presented a series of perplexing questions since they were first examined by archaeologists. Several aspects of the tombs have proved difficult to understand: the architectural origins of the chambers; their date of construction; the origin and symbolism of their decoration; and the ethnicity of their builders. One major difficulty is that the monuments, their creators, and their time period all lie at the margins of several disciplines: prehistory and history; archaeology and art history; the study of Carthage, Rome, and Berber society. The fact is, however, that haouanet are monuments that require interdisciplinary approaches, a blend of textual analysis, iconography, landscape archaeology, and theories of acculturation. In this essay I attempt to develop such a multifaceted approach for the first time, with a view towards situating the haouanet in the social and cultural development of North Africa.

No new approach can ignore the accomplishments of previous studies. Although the initial articles on haouanet, an Arabic word that translates as 'shops' (sing. hanout), were published more than a century ago, the first monograph-length treatment of these tombs, by Mansour Ghaki, appeared only in 1999.[1] It contains compelling evidence that some of the basic questions about haouanet have been answered, at least as well as they may ever be answered. There is general agreement that haouanet were carved

1 Ghaki 1999.

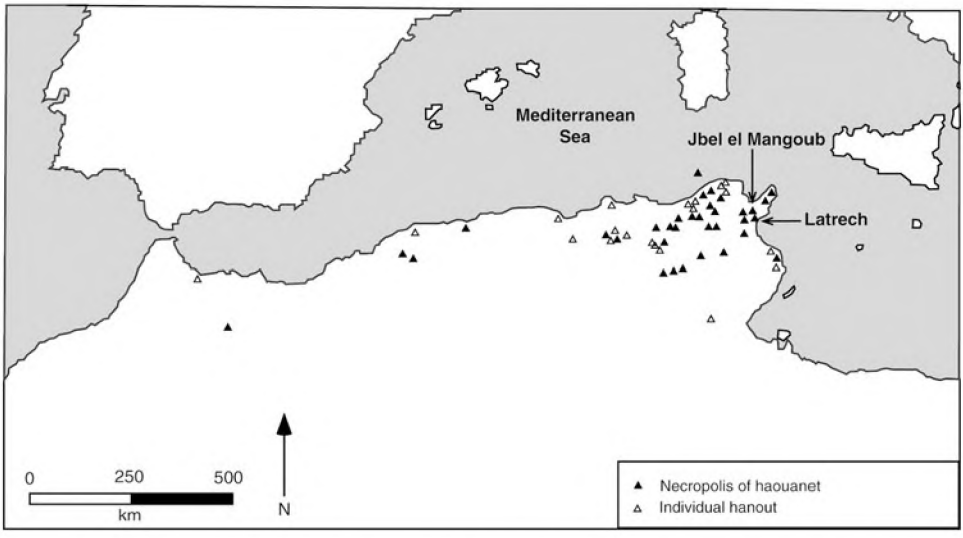


Figure 3.1 Distribution of haouanet in North Africa (after Camps 1961b: 96–97)

by indigenous North African peoples, variously termed Libyan, Berber, and Libyo-Phoenician, primarily during the fourth to second centuries B.C.E.[2] The builders of haouanet lived mainly in the triangular area between Bejaia, Cap Bon, and Jerba (fig. 3.1). High concentrations of the tombs may be found in several regions (cf. fig 1.2): the Kroumirie, Mogods, and Cap Bon (Tunisia) and the Tarf (Algeria). Outside of these areas, a few individual cemeteries at Monastir and Jerba (Tunisia), and Gastel (Algeria) contain a large number of the tombs.[3] The location of the more than four hundred[4] known haouanet conforms broadly though not exactly to an area scholars identify as the 'Carthaginian hinterland' because it formed the territory of North Africa that Carthage began to colonize ca 400 B.C.E. Cemeteries with haouanet range in size from a single hanout to 57 haouanet; more

2 Camps and Longerstay 2000: 3373; Longerstay 1995.

3 Camps and Longerstay 2000: 3365–68.

4 The number of haouanet in existence is one of the basic questions that remains to be answered (Ghaki 1999: 140–41). The volumes of the *Atlas préhistorique de Tunisie* (*APT*) published to date list 366; more certainly exist. These volumes (nos. 1–9, 11, 12, 19, and 23) cover only part of the area in which haouanet were constructed and include none of the rock-cut tombs in Algeria. In addition, studies conducted in more detail than the *APT* have yielded higher numbers. Recent examinations counted 26 haouanet at Jebel Sidi Zid, 57 at Jbel el Mangoub, and 16 at Latrech, for example, while the *APT* counted only 12, 35, and 13 haouanet respectively (Ghaki 1999; Ben Younes 2000).

than 80 cemeteries have been identified.[5] That the builders of haouanet in this region share a cultural affiliation is clear, but it may be impossible to determine their ethnic identity any more precisely, since literary sources only vaguely indicate the location and names of North Africa's inhabitants during this period. Regarding the dates of construction of the haouanet it is unreasonable to expect much further information as well. Since these tombs were exposed in rock outcrops and closed with slabs or rubble, but never perfectly sealed, only a minority have retained their contents. Even when artefacts have been found inside the tombs, the date of their deposition remains impossible to determine owing to their imperfect closure. Some scholars believe that a few haouanet may have been carved and decorated as early as the ninth and eighth century B.C.E. on the basis of archaic images on their walls.[6] These scholars also regard the hypogea of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Sicily as the architectural forerunners of the haouanet because the Sicilian rock-cut tombs consist of similar entranceways and interior chambers.[7] Despite the possibility of examples of haouanet from the first half of the first millennium B.C.E., there is considerable agreement that the majority of these North African tombs date between the fourth and second centuries B.C.E.[8] Many of the most fundamental questions about haouanet have thus been answered and it is now time to turn to issues of their interpretation.

Art-historical approaches have thoroughly examined the origins of the many sculpted, painted, and incised motifs on the walls of richly decorated haouanet. The range of decorative symbols is extensive, even within a single cemetery. Mansour Ghaki (1999) identified 36 design elements in 73 haouanet in his recent study, for example (table 3.1; 56–59 below).[9] It is obvious that the builders of haouanet imported many of these

5 Volumes 1–9, 11, 12, 19, and 23 of the *APT* list 80 sites; more certainly exist. Ghaki's catalogue lists 57 haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub (1999).

6 For example at Kef el Blida, where the rigging of a ship and the V-shaped design on the shield of a warrior have inclined scholars to place the tomb between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C.E. (Longerstay 1988–89).

7 Camps 1961b: 109–10. For the architectural comparanda in Sicily, Camps cites the hypogea at Pantalica and Cassabile. These tombs are dated from ca 1250 to 700 B.C.E in current scholarship (Leighton 1999: 167, 187).

8 Camps and Longerstay 2000; Ghaki 1999: 223. The period during which the tombs were constructed is sometimes identified as 'protohistory,' a term that Gabriel Camps, author of several articles on haouanet, prefers because it does not refer to any specific culture (1987: 59). Although the word itself may carry little bias in comparison to pre-Islamic, proto-Berber, or other terms, it is vague. In this essay I will refer to specific centuries where possible; failing that I will call the period 'the late first millennium B.C.E.' in order to use a more absolute term.

9 Table 3.1 contains 44 items, but the number cited here (36) does not include items that Ghaki found questionable or unidentifiable.

elements from other cultures, and research on the decoration of haouanet has focused on the identification of stylistic parallels in the art and architecture of other societies.[10] The origins of niches, benches, alcoves, and insignia depicting the goddess Tanit have been sought in Punic tombs at Carthage, Kerkouane, and elsewhere. Doric and Ionic columns have clear roots in Greek architecture, while the combination of a column surmounted by a niche has been located in Minoan Crete.[11] Scholars have also identified the probable sources of painted decorations such as ships (Greece) and tower-mausolea (Numidia) in the haouanet.[12] The variety of external influences on these tombs is well recognized. No two cemeteries of haouanet exhibit the same range of motifs and the same foreign influences. At Jebel Sidi Zid, Habib Ben Younes (2000) identified sculpted forms like sphinxes and beds with precedents in Egyptian and Etruscan art; few elements of the decoration at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech derive from Egypt or Etruria, but many, including warriors, weapons, headdresses, and inscriptions in the Libyan language seem to be indigenous.[13] While much effort has been expended on adducing parallels with representations in the art of other cultures, less attention has been directed towards interpreting the decoration of haouanet within the culture of their builders. The exploration of stylistic parallels has effectively formulated the study of haouanet as a search for the origin of motifs in other societies.

In order to gain new insight into the haouanet, I will attempt to subject them to analysis from other perspectives. Three areas that past scholarship has not considered in depth are the historical context in which the haouanet were constructed, the relationship of the tombs to the surrounding landscape, and the nature of the acculturation process demonstrated in the choice of design elements placed on the tomb walls.

The late first millennium B.C.E. witnessed the rise and fall of the first North African states and the appropriation of the lands in which the builders of haouanet lived. This historical context is frequently overlooked in evaluations of these monuments. I think it is essential to consider that they were constructed during an era of territorial expansion. The decision to place them in highly visible outcroppings of limestone or sandstone should also not be disregarded. Landscapes, as much as buildings or towns, are human artefacts, constructed for specific purposes and functions. Recent

10 Many articles consider the decoration of haouanet. For recent overviews summarizing earlier research and listing extensive bibliography, see Ghaki 1999: 133–217; Ghaki 2002; Camps and Longerstay 2000.

11 Camps 1987: 54.

12 Longerstay 1988–89; 1993.

13 Ghaki 1999.

investigations of the role of the landscape in illuminating human behaviour have pointed out that landscapes are especially effective mechanisms for study because they extend over large areas and, rather than reflecting single events, often chronicle ongoing processes.[14] Acculturation is one of the long-term processes affecting North Africa throughout the first millennium B.C.E. that historically contextual or landscape analyses are well suited to evaluate. In previous studies of haouanet, however, acculturation has generally been regarded as a one-way process in which indigenous societies absorbed aspects of foreign cultures. This perspective has obscured an investigation of the values and goals that indigenous North Africans possessed when carving and decorating the haouanet. Historical and archaeological studies that examine cultural contact in the New World have voiced a growing concern with the interpretation of indigenous societies and their relations with European colonists (Cronon 1983; Rubertone 1989; Torrence and Clarke 2000; Wolf 1982). Similar objections have also been raised in the study of classical Greece and the Roman Empire (Morris 1994; Webster and Cooper 1996; Scott and Webster 2003). I argue here that it is now important to consider the haouanet and the images on their walls as part of a North African culture, rather than a culture of outsiders. Approaching the haouanet with these ideas about acculturation, landscape, and historical context in mind may therefore lead to the formation of new conclusions about socio-cultural change in North Africa.

I have divided the following analysis into two parts. Part 1 offers some considerations of the context in which the haouanet were constructed, based on the evidence in the landscape and in ancient texts concerning North Africa at the time the haouanet were built. Part 2 conducts a case study of the two best published cemeteries of haouanet, integrating theoretical considerations of the process of acculturation with iconographic analysis of the design of the interior of these haouanet. A conclusion demonstrates that, by approaching the haouanet in this fashion, it is possible to generate not only new information about them, but also fresh interpretations.

## Part 1. The Late First Millennium B.C.E. in North Africa: History, Landscape, and People

An important first step towards a better understanding of the haouanet involves situating them within their historical context. The fourth to first centuries B.C.E. witnessed the formation of state-level societies and rapid social development in North Africa. Carthaginians, Numidians, and Ro-

14 Alcock 1993; Knapp and Ashmore 1999; Tilley 1994.

mans in succession exercised control over the central Maghreb at this time. First, the maritime city of Carthage extended its hegemony over its inland neighbours, developing a zone of control that stopped near the *fossa regia* as well as a much wider sphere of influence that seems to have reached the entire inhabited area of North Africa. In an example of secondary state formation, Carthaginian imperialism was matched by the growth of Numidian kingdoms from a loose confederation of tribes inhabiting the Tell and steppe regions of modern Tunisia and Algeria.[15] The Roman conquests of 146 B.C.E. and afterwards subjugated the entire area in which haouanet were built by the end of the first century B.C.E. The indigenous inhabitants of the Tell and steppe gained contact with a wider world as a result of the expansion of these societies, but simultaneously lost control over local situations to more distant powers. This process of incorporation cannot have failed to make a tremendous impact on them.

Greek and Latin authors, who treat the region primarily as a consequence of their interest in Rome's wars of conquest against Carthage, nonetheless present the outlines of a long-term struggle between the indigenous population and external invaders. Neighbouring North African communities played significant roles in uprisings against Carthaginian rule, as Dick Whittaker has argued.[16] Roman sources, admittedly biased, repeatedly mention such indigenous hatred of Carthage. During his invasion of North Africa in 256 B.C.E., for example, the Roman general Regulus encountered two hundred cities eager to defect from their Carthaginian overlords (Appian, *Pun.* 3). Throughout the Punic wars, sources say, Rome and Carthage treated Syphax, Masinissa, and other local leaders with caution, in order to build alliances with them.

These sources suggest that the inhabitants of the Carthaginian hinterland, the area with the densest concentration of haouanet, were caught between growing powers. To what extent they were politically independent, affiliated with the Numidian kingdoms, or tied to Carthage remains poorly known. Numidian administrative centres were located at some distance from the dense concentration of haouanet in northern Tunisia, although small numbers of haouanet exist near Dougga, Bulla Regia, and other royal cities. These Numidian centres depended on alliances with tribes spread over a large area. Some of the allied tribes may have buried their dead in haouanet; likewise, some haouanet builders may have lived under the control of Carthage from the beginning of its imperialist phase. Given the expansion and contraction brought on by frequent disputes between

15 Camps 1961a; Gsell 1920: 93–181, 1927: 77–81; Lund 1988.
16 Whittaker 1978: 338; Diodorus Siculus 14.77.3.

Carthage and the Numidian kingdoms, it is probably safest to acknowledge that the political situation did not remain constant over time. Indeed, the wide distribution of haouanet (and megalithic tombs) throughout the Maghreb indicates that political boundaries did not correspond to the use of a specific tomb type. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the haouanet indicate a demonstration of affiliation – not on political but on cultural, ethnic, or other grounds.[17]

Political developments may nevertheless have precipitated such displays of affiliation. One argument of this chapter is that the haouanet provide documentation of the colonial incursion into indigenous society during the fourth, third, and second centuries B.C.E. The evidence centres on the nature of the mortuary landscape of this period. As the expanding civilizations – Carthage, Numidia, and Rome – were absorbing this region, indigenous inhabitants responded by appropriating it for the construction of very visible, and at times monumental, tombs. Funerary structures began to dominate the landscape of North Africa in the second half of the first millennium B.C.E.; for this reason, it has become common to refer to portions of Tunisia and Algeria as the 'land of haouanet' or the 'land of dolmens,' after the types of tombs they most commonly contain. These new tombs involve the creation of a permanent presence in a landscape in which no such durable markers previously existed. This is a fundamental yet often overlooked aspect of the haouanet.

Comparative archaeological studies have made many contributions to the understanding of mortuary landscapes in similar prehistoric and protohistoric circumstances.[18] One of the most significant concerns the suggestion that 'corporate descent groups' – groups that function as individuals in relation to property[19] – use cemeteries to legitimize access to vital resources, such as land.[20] Some archaeologists have criticized this theory,[21] but others have argued that it provides a means to link burials and social structure.[22] In the case of haouanet, there is support for the idea that corporate groups could have used the tombs to legitimize their activities. Several key aspects of the theory can be identified in the evidence from North Africa: a need to control resources, a relationship between tombs

17 In this context, I intend 'ethnic affiliation' to indicate the social construction of an identity rather than membership in an ethnic group based on genetic, linguistic, or religious characteristics (Hall 1997: 17–33).

18 Beck 1995; Chapman 1981; Renfrew 1976.

19 Hayden and Cannon 1982.

20 Saxe 1970: 119–21; Goldstein 1981: 61.

21 Hodder 1984: 51–53.

22 Chapman 1995; Morris 1987: 52–54.

and property, and the presence of corporate descent groups. Contemporary disputes over the allocation of resources, including land and labour, have already been sketched. Although literary evidence relevant to these tombs is scanty, one text provides a clear demonstration of the use of tombs as boundary markers in the landscape. This inscription, engraved on a stone found at Jebel Massouge, 25 kilometres north of Mactar, was erected by a royal official in the twenty-first year of the reign of Micipsa (128–127 B.C.E.). A translation of the neo-Punic text reads, 'WLBH, the son of [A]ris, son of DWS, son of NRWT, son of Zililsan, who has been placed in charge of the territories of Tiskat, has erected this stone by order of the Prince Micipsa, in the twenty-first year of his reign. There are 240 stades from the stone that stands near the tomb up to this stone.'[23] The area between both stones mentioned in the inscription seems to have formed the district for which the official was responsible. In the text it is clear that tombs and boundary stones functioned in a similar fashion – they marked important territorial divisions in the landscape. It may even be possible that the boundary stone was placed near the tomb because the latter was already serving as a territorial boundary, before the stone acknowledged its role in writing. While the tomb mentioned in the text probably does not refer to a specific hanout or cemetery of haouanet, and more likely refers to a single large structure,[24] it nonetheless establishes the function of tombs as important landscape markers in the late first millennium B.C.E. If so, it seems reasonable that one function of the haouanet may have been to demarcate property. Finally, additional literary evidence refers to tribes in all areas of North Africa and clearly asserts that some of these tribes acted as corporate descent groups in maintaining tombs for ritual purposes. According to Pomponius Mela (1.45), 'the Augilae consider the spirits of their ancestors as gods, they swear by these and consult them as oracles, and, having made their requests, they treat the dreams of those who sleep in their tombs as responses.' No specific evidence links the Augilae, or any other corporate descent group that could be identified through textual sources, to the haouanet. Nonetheless, the presence of tombs functioning as boundaries, the existence of corporate groups, and the need for control of vital resources were certainly present in the late first millennium B.C.E. in North Africa. It seems reasonable to postulate a correlation between these factors and the construction of the many cemeteries with haouanet in the region of the Tell and Cap Bon.

23 Février 1957.

24 James Février (1957) has suggested that the 'tomb' mentioned in the inscription was the tower-mausoleum of Ateban at Dougga.

The genesis of a 'landscape of haouanet' can be said to lie in the turbulent historical context of the fourth to second centuries B.C.E. Social changes, such as the increased stratification of North African societies or the growth in external influence over local groups and places in this period, regularly stimulate responses in other areas, including trade, technology, and mortuary behaviour. Such shifts may in this case have led to greater expenditures of effort and wealth in mortuary practice, making tombs more visible than they had previously been. What effects did these changes have in other areas of society? First, the high visibility of these new tombs may itself have demarcated the landscape for later residents of this area. That a distinction can be made between a land of haouanet and a land of dolmens suggests that conspicuous placement of tombs may have 'kept out' other funerary monuments. Second, the indigenous response to the colonization of North Africa by outside groups likely included the construction of other, non-funerary monuments. But this suggestion is difficult to demonstrate because at present a major problem in studying the North African landscape in this period is that few sources of evidence other than funerary monuments and brief texts exist. Recent discoveries that indicate that settlements contemporary with the haouanet lie on fortified hilltops offer promising leads.[25] These settlements contain walls of dressed stone surrounding the hilltop or the defensible part of a mountain spur; in a few cases poorly preserved interior walls remain and fragments of black-glazed pottery and transport amphoras date the sites to the third and second centuries B.C.E. Such fortified settlements may correspond to the 'castles, towers, and defensive installations' mentioned as *castella*, *pyrgoi*, and *phrouria* in the discussions of the North African landscape in the texts of Greek and Roman authors.[26] Construction of semi-urban centres and the establishment of more visible and permanent funerary structures may now plausibly be considered to have occurred at approximately the same time. These newly discovered hilltop sites have yet to be excavated, or even systematically surveyed, however. The funerary landscape remains the best-known evidence about the societies that inhabited the hinterland of Carthage and regions further south and west in this period.

The historical framework outlined above has an important contribution to make to the study of haouanet. It has demonstrated that the builders of these tombs began to place them in visible locales during the late first millennium B.C.E., presumably to identify ownership of the land. It has

25 Ferchiou 1990a, 1990b, 1994.

26 Appian, *Pun.* 101; Sallust, *Bell. Iug.* 54.6, 87.1; Livy 42.23.

located the tombs definitively within a North African context, fixing their geographical roots firmly in the historical processes of the colonization and social development of North Africa, rather than situating the 'origins' of haouanet in motifs imported from elsewhere. Now it is time to consider how the decoration on the walls of the tombs can shed light on the society of their builders.

## Part 2. Inside the Haouanet: The Cultural Milieu of the Late First Millennium B.C.E.

The builders of haouanet depicted human and animal subjects as well as a wide range of naturalistic, man-made, and geometric motifs on the walls of these tombs. In a few instances these motifs have been incised on the walls, but most examples consist of painted images or of relief sculptures. Only in the last case, in which the builders reserved space for the sculptures on the rock face, can one know for certain that the decoration was made at the time the tomb was constructed. Among and within the many known cemeteries with haouanet the frequency and style of painted, incised, and sculptural decoration may vary considerably.

Modern scholarship has tended to examine other Mediterranean cultures for the iconographic origins of decorative elements in the haouanet. Previous studies have often determined the stylistic parallels of this decoration, but have not made a careful exploration of its meaning in the haouanet. The important relationship between the colonization of the interior of North Africa and the late first millennium B.C.E. makes it clear that the decorative elements in the haouanet need to be viewed as symbols produced by an indigenous group of 'haouanet builders' rather than borrowed from Carthaginians, Greeks, Egyptians, Sicilians, and Etruscans. This analysis adopts the perspective that an examination of the symbols in haouanet may reveal more than the transmission of new motifs to North Africa from external origins; it can also document the creation of new meanings throughout this period. Comparative studies of acculturation and colonization suggest that when new symbols are introduced from one culture to another, the meaning of these symbols is explored, contested, and negotiated. Often these symbols acquire new meanings: dominant groups do not simply enforce the adoption of new symbols and values that embody precisely the same meaning in both societies. The creation of new meanings occurs, especially, at sites that remain under the control of the indigenous population.[27] It is already clear, from the great expansion in

27 Torrence and Clarke 2000: 9–12.

Figure 3.2 Overview of haouanet in the cemetery of Latrech (Camps and Longerstay 2000: 3366)

construction of haouanet and the attempts to utilize them to mark significant places in the landscape, that these tombs indicate that the indigenous inhabitants of North Africa were adopting a new way of thinking about the world. The decorative elements chosen for the walls of the haouanet, too, did not simply continue the way things had always been done. A close examination of the decorative elements inside the tombs therefore offers a good opportunity to approach the cultural milieu of the late 1st millennium B.C.E.

### *Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech: Case Studies*

Two cemeteries containing haouanet have been published in their entirety. They alone offer the possibility of statistical analysis. Mansour Ghaki (1999) has studied these neighbouring cemeteries on Cap Bon consisting of a total of 73 haouanet (fig. 3.2). This sample is not of sufficient size to draw statistical conclusions about the more than four hundred known haouanet. Nor is it of sufficient breadth, deriving from only two of the more than eighty known cemeteries with haouanet in Tunisia.[28] Still, Ghaki's detailed publication of all 57 haouanet from Jbel el Mangoub and all 16 from Latrech makes it possible to examine associations and combinations of decorative elements within these tombs much more carefully than has

28 See above, nn. 4 and 5, for information on the numbers of haouanet.

previously been feasible. These haouanet are situated in lower Cap Bon, in one of the main regions where haouanet were constructed, and share many of the characteristics of haouanet found at other cemeteries. No evidence indicates that the same population buried its dead in the two cemeteries, but their contemporaneity (both date from the fourth to second centuries B.C.E.),[29] proximity (4 km apart), and relation to the modern town of Sidi Mhamed Latrech made it feasible for Ghaki to consider them together. Based on the data compiled by Ghaki in a thorough catalogue, the following section will present a statistical analysis of the decorative elements on their walls, followed by an interpretation of specific recurrent images.[30]

Table 3.1 lists all design elements noted within the haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech with the exception of an entryway and an interior chamber, which by definition all haouanet must contain. The elements are grouped by subject and the table indicates whether the element has been carved, sculpted, painted, or incised. The table does not distinguish between elements that appear to be functional (e.g., a step leading from the entryway to the chamber) and those that appear to be related to the symbolic aspects of the decoration (e.g., a painted animal). Thus, the terms 'decoration' or 'decorative element' apply to all elements of design in the following discussion. At various points below this analysis will refer to decorative elements on the walls of haouanet in other cemeteries, but the reader should bear in mind that statistical observations are currently possible only at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech, the sites that Ghaki has recently published.

Individual haouanet have approximately the same size and shape, but their painted, incised, and sculptural decoration exhibit distinct differences. I will begin my discussion with an overall statistical analysis of decorative elements before commenting on specific ones. A total of 36 different decorative elements in the tombs has been identified by Ghaki. Of these, almost half (16) appear only once and a further 6 appear just two times each, leaving only 14 of the elements common to three or more tombs. Niches are the most frequently encountered elements at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech. Almost 75 per cent (54 of 73 tombs) contain a niche carved into an interior wall. These niches generally extend $20 \times 20 \times 10$ cm and are thought to have contained offerings such as food, lamps, and other small vessels.[31] The second and third most prevalent elements, a step from the entranceway to the floor and a plain painted horizontal line, appear in

29 Ghaki 1999: 223–34.

30 Ibid.: 21–131. In addition to providing a thorough catalogue of the tombs in the cemeteries, Ghaki has made his own study of their decoration (133–217). His interpretation differs in several respects from the following analysis.

31 Ibid.: 158–60.

only 30 and 26 per cent of the tombs respectively. The simplest hanout contains nothing more than an entryway and a chamber: at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech six tombs fall into this category, and a further six were incompletely carved or too poorly preserved for any additional decoration to be identified.[32] Most tombs, therefore, were elaborated in some fashion. Among the more common motifs are representations of human beings, animals, tower-mausolea, columns, and geometric shapes. About half of the tombs (34 of 73) contain painted, incised, or sculptural decoration. These forms of decoration present the most detailed scenes, and they deserve the most careful consideration, but not only on account of their complexity. They also create a picture of a certain kind of world, a realm that promotes specific aspects of indigenous society in this mortuary setting, and excludes others. It is important to consider both the included and excluded aspects.

### *Humans*

Human beings, 15 of whom are represented in 13 scenes in 8 haouanet, are frequently depicted as hunters or soldiers (see table 3.1). In terms of the human beings depicted on the walls of the haouanet, sexual attributes are not readily distinguishable. Still, all are arguably men; none can be said to bear any female characteristics. An association between humans, animals, and violence can be detected in several haouanet, most closely in hanout 6 at Latrech in which two hunters carry weapons and wear the antlers of a stag (fig. 3.3).[33] Such imagery also plays a prominent role in the other tombs. Five human figures in four scenes hunt or confront wild opponents such as deer, gazelle, and other creatures. They hurl spears and point swords at their prey; in one case 13 arrows have pierced the back of a large but unidentifiable animal (hanout 1, Jbel el Mangoub).[34] In four other scenes an armed human stands prepared to fight, but no opponent is present. Two further scenes probably depict an armed human attacking an animal, but poor preservation of the tomb wall renders a definitive reading of each scene impossible. Combat between two soldiers likely appears once at Jbel el Mangoub, although this painting is again too poorly preserved to make identification clear. There are two scenes

32 Not including hanout 27 at Jbel el Mangoub, which was inadvertently omitted from Ghaki's catalogue.

33 Although hanout 11 at Jbel el Mangoub and hanout 14 at Latrech have poorly preserved paintings, it is possible that they contain images of similarly attired hunters, according to Ghaki. He also cites parallels to similar headdresses in other tombs of the period (1999: 194–96).

34 See table 3.1 for the numbering of haouanet, following Ghaki 1999.

Table 3.1 Design elements in the haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech (based on catalogue compiled by Ghaki, 1999: 21-131)

| Jbel el Mangoub | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| single niche | C | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | x | | x | | x | | x |
| multiple niches | C | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| niche and column | | x | | | x | | | | | x | | x | | | | x | | | | | | |
| Doric column | S | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ionic column | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ionic column | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable column | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable column | S | x | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | x | | | | | | |
| mausoleum | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| sign of Tanit | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| inscription | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | |
| ship | P | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| armour or weapon | P | x | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | | x |
| hunter/soldier | P | x | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| hunter/soldier? | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | x |
| unarmed person | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| horse and rider | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ploughing? | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| fish | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| snake | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| cock | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| gazelle | P | x | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| deer | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| ox/cow | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable animal | P | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable animal | I | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| horizontal line | P | | | | x | x | | | | | | x | | | | x | x | | x | | | x |
| vertical line | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| grid | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| band of triangles | P | | | | | | | x | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | | x |
| band of circles | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| triangle | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| round object | P | | | | x | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| star | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| ladder? | P | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| hand? | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| step | S | | x | | | | | | | | | x | | x | | | x | | | | | |
| esplanade | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | |
| alcove | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | |
| bench | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| additional room | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | |
| connecting corridor | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| moulding on interior | S | | | | x | | | | | x | | | x | | | | x | | x | | | |
| unidentifiable painting | P | | | | | | | | | x | | | x | | | | | | | | | |

C=carved decoration, P=painting, S=relief sculpture, I=incision

| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x | | x | x | | | x | | | x | | | | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | x |
| | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | x | x | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |
| | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |
| | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | x | | x |
| | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | x |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | | | x | | x |
| | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | |
| | | | x | x | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |

| Jbel el Mangoub | | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| single niche | C | x | x | x | x | x | | x | |
| multiple niches | C | | | | | | x | | |
| niche and column | | | | | | | x | | |
| Doric column | S | | | | | | | | |
| Ionic column | P | | | | | | | | |
| Ionic column | I | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable column | P | | | | | x | | | |
| unidentifiable column | S | | | | | | x | | |
| mausoleum | P | | | | | | x | | |
| sign of Tanit | P | | | | | | | | |
| inscription | I | | | | | | | | |
| ship | P | | | | | | | | |
| armour or weapon | P | | | | | | | | |
| hunter/soldier | P | | | | | | | | |
| hunter/soldier? | P | | | | | | | | |
| unarmed person | P | | | | | | x | | |
| horse and rider | P | | | | | | | | |
| ploughing? | P | | | | | | x | | |
| fish | P | | | | | | | | |
| snake | P | | | | | | | | |
| cock | P | | | | | | | | |
| gazelle | P | | | | | | | | |
| deer | P | | | | | | | | |
| ox/cow | P | | | | | | x | | |
| unidentifiable animal | P | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable animal | I | | | | | | | | |
| horizontal line | P | x | | | | | | | |
| vertical line | P | | | | x | | | | |
| grid | P | | | | | | | | |
| band of triangles | P | | x | | x | x | x | | |
| band of circles | P | | | | | | | | |
| triangle | P | | | | | | | | |
| round object | P | | | | | | | | |
| star | P | | | | | | | | |
| ladder? | P | | | | | | | | |
| hand? | P | | | | | | | | |
| step | S | | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| esplanade | C | x | x | | | | | | |
| alcove | C | | | | | | x | | |
| bench | S | | | | | | | | |
| additional room | C | | | | | | | | |
| connecting corridor | C | | | | | | | | |
| moulding on interior | S | | | | | | x | | |
| unidentifiable painting | P | | | | | | | | |

C=carved decoration, P=painting, S=relief sculpture, I=incision

| Latrech | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| single niche | C | x | x | x | x | | | x | | x | | x | | x | x | x | x |
| multiple niches | C | | | | | | x | | | | x | | | | | | |
| niche and column | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |
| Doric column | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ionic column | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ionic column | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable column | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |
| unidentifiable column | S | x | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| mausoleum | P | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | |
| sign of Tanit | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| inscription | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ship | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| armour or weapon | P | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| hunter/soldier | P | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| hunter/soldier? | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | |
| unarmed person | P | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| horse and rider | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ploughing? | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| fish | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| snake | P | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| cock | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| gazelle | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| deer | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| cow | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable animal | P | | | | | | x | | | x | | | | | x | | |
| unidentifiable animal | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| plain band | P | x | | | | x | x | x | | x | x | | | | x | | |
| vertical line | P | | | | | x | | x | | | x | | | | | | |
| grid | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| band of triangles | P | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | |
| band of circles | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| triangle | P | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | |
| round object | P | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | |
| star | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ladder? | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| hand? | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| step | S | x | x | x | x | | | x | | x | | | | | x | | |
| esplanade | C | | x | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| alcove | C | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| bench | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | |
| additional room | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| connecting corridor | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| moulding on interior | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| unidentifiable painting | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | |

C=carved decoration, P=painting, S=relief sculpture, I=incision

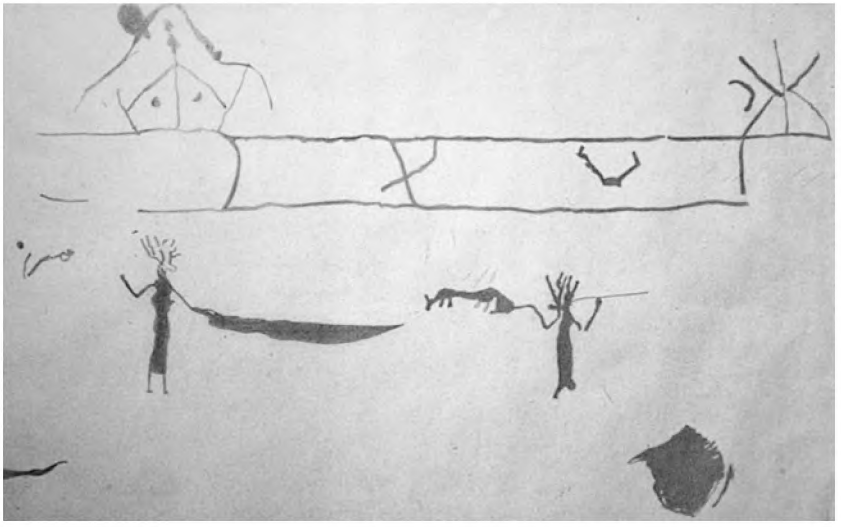

Figure 3.3 Hunting scene from hanout 6 at Latrech (Ghaki 1999: 120. Courtesy of Mansour Ghaki-INP)

in which humans appear with domesticated animals; one shows a farmer ploughing with two oxen, the other a rider on horseback. Pursuit and slaughter, however, link nearly the entire group of humans in the tombs: 13 of 15 participate in violent activities. It does not matter that each and every scene conforms to the same pattern – the preponderance of images depicting persons engaged in hunting or combat at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech clearly documents an important phenomenon. What do these images reflect about the builders of haouanet, and what effects do they have upon viewers?

In thinking about the reasons artists chose to represent these images on the walls of haouanet it is useful to make a comparison to pottery manufactured in the Greek city-state of Corinth. In the seventh century B.C.E., Corinthian potters and painters were experimenting with design elements imported from the Near East. They developed a new repertoire of visual images for their pottery, similar in several ways to that which appeared in haouanet. Archaic Greek pottery from Corinth emphasizes the representation of humans, animals, and violent behaviour against nature. Corinthian painters juxtaposed warriors, birds, deer, lions, and other animals in friezes encircling various pottery shapes. In a study of Corinthian pottery, Michael Shanks (1999) explains these images by noting a divorce between societal norms and violent behaviour, suggesting that a general

theme the artists convey is that by partaking in war or violence one departs from society. In his analysis, Shanks makes several comparisons in asserting that connections between animals, humans, violence, war, and extra-societal behaviour have parallels in many other cultures.[35] Several aspects of Shanks's study are relevant when considering images of humans in the haouanet beyond the frequency with which animals, humans, and violence coexist in this art. The mortuary context of the haouanet may in some way be pertinent to the notion of a departure from society. Each hanout containing human figures is among the most elaborate in these two cemeteries. From this it is clear that those who entombed their dead in the haouanet and fellow members of their society who viewed the tombs during their construction or funerary ceremonies would have regarded these images as purposeful. They create a picture of violent human aggression against nature, and reinforce associations between animals, hunting, violence, men, and death. Images in haouanet at other cemeteries project similar impressions of violent action with scenes of battles between humans, warriors in ships, and men wearing antlers on their heads; all three can be seen in the well-known painting from Kef el Blida.[36] One final point about aggressive human figures remains: Shanks believes that these violent images represent 'otherness' – they stretch beyond the mundane experiences of life into a rarefied domain. As we shall see below, the inclusion of the uncommon and foreign to the exclusion of the everyday and local has its counterpart in other types of images represented in the haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech.

## *Animals*

Not all animals are alike – some were not meant to be slaughtered. When animals appear without humans, as seven of them do in five tombs, they seem to perform apotropaic functions, as can be concluded from the alert and aggressive poses they strike. Wherever the quality of preservation permits close observation of these animals, one notices that the artists have rendered the most fearful parts of their anatomy in an exaggerated posture. Two cocks that stand atop the two mausolea in hanout 26 at Jbel el Mangoub document the clearest instance of this depiction. Camps has demonstrated that North African cultures, over a wide area and long period of time, depicted the cock as the protector of a tomb.[37] With its

35 Shanks 1999: 121–50.

36 For extensive discussion of this image, see Bisi 1966; Longerstay 1988–89; Camps 1987.

37 Camps 1992: 35–48.

Figure 3.4 Fish, niche, and column from hanout 11 at Jbel el Mangoub (Ghaki 1999: 96. Courtesy of Mansour Ghaki-INP)

hostile body parts exaggerated, the cock 'is the primary watchful, protective animal guaranteeing, thanks to its strong beak, its aggressive comb, and its formidable spurs, the tranquility of the dead'.[38] At Jbel el Mangoub, fish, snakes, and a gazelle may also represent animals that ward off evil. Two fish in hanout 11 at Jbel el Mangoub are depicted with their spines erect, in a similar alert and watchful position (fig. 3.4). The fish face each other on either side of a niche carved on top of a painted Ionic column. At the back of the niche is painted a 'protective hand' thought to exert similar apotropaic powers. Adjacent to the fish are a snake and a star; these too may perform the same function. In hanout 21 at Jbel el Mangoub, a deer to the right of a niche is depicted with exaggeratedly long and spiky antlers.

Other images of solitary animals in hanout 4 at Jbel el Mangoub and hanout 9 at Latrech are too poorly preserved for analysis. But support for the apotropaic nature of these images derives from nearby haouanet. At Jebel Sidi Zid, 16 kilometres from these cemeteries, bulls' heads, human heads, snakes, and sphinxes guard the entrances and interior of tombs (Ben Younes 2000). Religious symbols, like the image of Tanit, may arguably

38 Ibid.: 48.

perform the same function. The insignia of Tanit appears once at Jbel el Mangoub on the back wall of a niche in hanout 21, and once above the entrance to a tomb at Jebel Sidi Zid.

### *Mausolea*

Several haouanet and Punic tombs display on their walls a curious reference to mausolea, another contemporary tomb type in North Africa.[39] Mausolea are among the most elaborate and well-studied funerary monuments in North Africa in the late first millennium B.C.E.[40] This tomb type was introduced to North Africa as early as the late fourth century B.C.E.[41] It is an excellent example of the acculturation that was taking place in North Africa in this period, as members of indigenous society adopted material goods and values from the eastern Mediterranean. Many scholars have argued that mausolea were initially the products of royal patronage, although there is no direct evidence linking them to members of a royal family.[42]

The tower-mausoleum, the most common type of mausoleum in North Africa, has multiple levels, stands several metres above the ground, and is capped by a pyramid (cf. fig. 4.1).[43] It frequently contains architectural decoration such as columns, cornices, mouldings, and sculptural friezes. The five images of tower-mausolea painted on the walls of three haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and one at Latrech all conform to this general description. Four consist of a mausoleum set on a podium and surmounted by a pyramid. Cocks stand atop two of the pyramids, masts on the others.[44] In the final case no podium is visible and a niche containing a figure of Tanit has been inset above the pyramid of the mausoleum (fig. 3.5).[45] The paintings of tower-mausolea at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech are in all cases

39 Haouanet: Jbel el Mangoub, Latrech, Ben Yasla, El Guetma, Jbel Zabouj, Sidi Ali Jebali, Sidi Bou Aziz. Punic tombs: El Mansourah, Jbel Mlezza, Rejiche, Sidi Salem.

40 Coarelli and Thébert 1988; Rakob 1979, 1983.

41 Dates for the earliest mausolea have been the subject of much debate. Perhaps the most reliable evidence comes from radiocarbon studies of samples from beams in the Medracen tomb, which place it near 320 B.C.E. (Camps 1973), though many scholars date all of the mausolea to the third and second centuries B.C.E. For further discussion of the dating of these mausolea, see Coarelli and Thébert 1988; Rakob 1979, 1983; Camps 1995; Longerstay 1993).

42 Rakob 1979, 1983.

43 For tower-mausolea in the Roman period, see Moore, this volume.

44 As discussed above, Camps (1992) has argued that the cock probably serves as a guardian for the tomb.

45 For a detailed description of each mausoleum, see Ghaki 1999: 201–02, as well as the entry for each hanout in his catalogue.

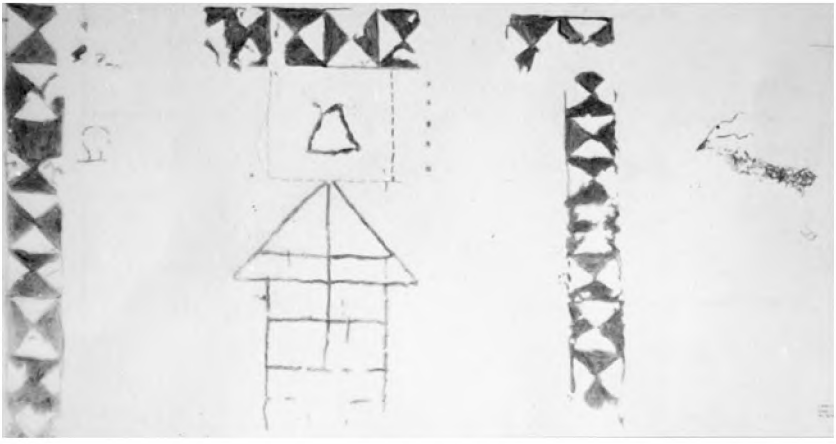

Figure 3.5 Mausoleum from hanout 21 at Jbel el Mangoub (Ghaki 1999: 65. Courtesy of Mansour Ghaki-INP)

accompanied by horizontal bands of triangular decoration, and four times by additional plain horizontal lines (cf. 'Geometric Designs' below).

Scholars have commented at length on these paintings and those of mausolea in other cemeteries of haouanet and in Punic tombs. Three aspects of the mausolea have received the most discussion. First, the mausolea indicate the adoption by indigenous North African societies of 'a large, architecturally complex construction destined to glorify a man or a dynasty.'[46] The mausoleum originated in Near Eastern societies with the assistance of Greek artists in the sixth to fourth centuries B.C.E. and spread to Egypt, North Africa, Italy, and elsewhere afterwards. Second, Monique Longerstay and other scholars have recognized that images of mausolea constitute some of the most reliably dated material in haouanet. They have utilized the images to establish a *terminus post quem* for the haouanet on whose walls they appear. These haouanet are dated after the construction of the first known tower-mausolea in North Africa, which may have taken place ca 200 B.C.E.[47] Third, the choice of a tomb as a symbol painted (or in one case incised) inside another tomb appears striking – Claude Poinssot, J.W. Salomonson, Donald Harden, Mhamed Fantar, and Gabriel Camps have speculated as to why the builders of haouanet and Punic tombs decided to evoke funerary monuments used by other cultures in their own

46 Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 777.

47 Longerstay 1993: 46–47. On dates of the mausolea, see n. 36 above.

tombs. Poinssot and Salomonson argued that the mausoleum represents the type of monument the family of the dead would have constructed, if it had possessed the power or the means.[48] Harden considered the mausolea to represent both cult shrines as well as tombs at which ancestors were worshipped.[49] For Fantar, the mausoleum illustrates 'an evocation of the voyage of the soul' in the afterlife.[50] Camps disagreed with all of these hypotheses, preferring to regard the mausoleum and other images like the sign of Tanit that also appear in the tombs as symbols of the rituals performed for the dead.[51] With several conflicting interpretations of the tower-mausolea depicted in haouanet, it is very difficult to make sense of them, as Ghaki has acknowledged.[52] One way of understanding them, however, is to explore the meaning of built mausolea in late-first-millennium B.C.E. North Africa.

Filippo Coarelli and Yvon Thébert have argued that the mausoleum was the means by which Numidian kings associated themselves with eastern monarchs such as Alexander the Great.[53] Camps (1995) has questioned this idea, asserting that the mausolea derive more from Punic than Hellenistic models. Whatever the intended association may have been, the large size and elaborate decoration of these monuments allowed their occupants to demonstrate their fame, external connections, and authority. They stood apart from the funerary structures of their predecessors and contemporaries. One measure of their influence must be that mausolea were to continue as funerary monuments of high status in North Africa in subsequent periods.[54] If the built mausolea had the sort of impact on indigenous society that seems plausible in this reconstruction, then it is not surprising that painted mausolea should also appear in haouanet, perhaps postdating the first built mausolea by a few years. There they may have allowed those entombed in haouanet opportunities to assert their power, reputation, and connections with Punic, Hellenistic, and also Numidian ruling classes, albeit on a reduced scale.

As has been argued above, images of humans and animals represent an ideology of violence and power. Mausolea do not appear to convey the same messages as these other elements in the decorative program of the haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech; instead they may communicate

48 Poinssot and Salomonson 1963: 75.
49 Harden 1962: 111.
50 Fantar 1988: 37.
51 Camps 1992: 44.
52 Ghaki 1999: 207.
53 Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 807–18.
54 See Moore, Mattingly this volume.

other, perhaps related, meanings. The number of examples of mausolea in haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech, in other cemeteries of haouanet, and in Punic tombs suggests that this decorative element was used infrequently. Longerstay has identified six images of mausolea in haouanet, not including the five at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech. She has also counted seven images of mausolea in Punic tombs and three on stelai.[55] This number is still sizeable enough to question the idea that acculturation existed only at the uppermost levels of society during the late first millennium B.C.E. The decision to place an image of a mausoleum on the wall of a hanout indicates a desire to associate with the Punic or Hellenistic world spread beyond the Numidian elite. It is perhaps sensible to conclude that a significant proportion of indigenous society took the initiative to associate itself with the wider world, and that archaeologists should expect to find greater evidence of acculturation in material remains from this period.

### *Columns*

Columns were sculpted, painted, and incised on the wall by the builders and artists who created haouanet. The use of columns was adopted by indigenous societies of North Africa from Greece and Egypt, via Carthage. It will therefore serve as another example to test ideas about acculturation advocated in this paper.

One Doric and two Ionic columns can be recognized at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech; there are also nine other columns whose order it is impossible to distinguish. All twelve columns are found in tombs with carved niches, but there is a further and more direct association between these two decorative elements. On ten occasions a niche was carved directly atop the column; such is the case in figure 3.4 in which a painted Ionic column can be seen below a niche. Camps has argued that the superposition of niches and columns derives from the association of these two elements in the palaces of Minoan Crete, at sites such as Aghia Triada and Knossos.[56] His idea marks one instance in which scholars have conducted a search for the origins of motifs in haouanet, and have discovered it in an earlier Mediterranean culture. But there is little evidence to link Crete in the sixteenth century B.C.E. with North Africa in the fourth to second centuries B.C.E. Camps merely implies that a connection lies in 'the most ancient Mediterranean traditions.'[57] As is characteristic of scholarship on

55 Longerstay 1993: 28, 31, 33.
56 Camps 1987: 54.
57 Ibid.: 54–55; Camps and Longerstay 2000: 3372–74.

haouanet, research into the meaning of the decorative elements found in them has yet not continued beyond the discovery of this parallel motif in an earlier Mediterranean culture. Camps's thesis, in particular, does not offer an explanation for the re-emergence of the column as a symbol after more than a millennium in which it was not used. An alternative interpretation may provide a more reliable account of the process of acculturation in North Africa.

It is important to look more closely at the other places where columns and capitals appear in North African societies. Numerous examples of columns and capitals in haouanet from other cemeteries, as well as in other fourth- to second-century B.C.E. monuments such as cylindrical and tower-mausolea, indicate that they were symbols regularly found in funerary contexts. The earliest is the Medracen tomb, a cylindrical mausoleum built ca 320 B.C.E. on a grand scale (diameter = 59 m, height = 18.5 m; fig. 1.2). In this monument, the columns offer one of several elements that distinguish the architecture of the Medracen from that of a megalithic tomb. Tower-mausolea of the third and second centuries B.C.E. regularly contain columns or pilasters as well (for example, at Siga, El Khroub, Dougga, and Sabratha). Likewise, structures in the Numidian sanctuaries at Chemtou and Kbor Klib of the second to first centuries B.C.E. also contain columns. All of these monuments are among the largest and most extravagant built in North Africa during the late first millennium B.C.E., possibly by the Numidian kings. Whether these mausolea and sanctuaries originated in royal or simply elite patronage, however, is a question that does not need resolution for our purposes. What matters is that columns appear in the most prestigious indigenous monuments of the period. Their employment here seems a more proximate source of influence for the builders of haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech. This contextual analysis of columns in monuments of this period suggests that, in the eyes of the builders of haouanet, these design elements made a direct reference to the tombs of the wealthiest and most powerful contemporary inhabitants of North Africa. At the same time, the columns might have associated the builders of haouanet with Greece, Egypt, and other areas of the Hellenistic world. In addition, one should not exclude the possibility for influence from Carthage, where the column had a long history of use in important public and private settings.[58] One conclusion appears probable: the column, like the humans, animals, and mausolea, referred to ideas and places recognizable to the builders of haouanet from their environment. Even if these images were glimpsed in rare rather than

58 Lancel 1992: 332–40.

everyday circumstances, they still did not derive from a dim and distant past.

Within the haouanet, the column functions as more than a borrowed symbol; the builders of haouanet created their own meaning through the addition of a niche directly above the column. The precise symbolism of the niche and column combination within the haouanet remains unknown. It perhaps served as a locus of cult activity in the tombs, with the niche providing space for offerings, although this may be impossible to determine given the paucity of artefacts preserved in haouanet. The frequency of the niche-and-column combination at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech nevertheless demonstrates the deliberate association of the two. Eighty-three per cent of columns are surmounted by niches; 14 per cent of all tombs contain a niche-column combination. These numbers establish the ability of the builders of haouanet to explore and negotiate new symbols on their own terms and allow us to attribute to indigenous North Africans a more active role in the process of acculturation than previous studies have.

### *Geometric Designs*

Painted geometric designs form the final group of images found in the haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech. They take the shape of plain horizontal or vertical lines, grids, bands of circles, bands of triangles, round objects, and triangles. Geometric designs are present in 26 of 73 haouanet (36%). Their function differs from that of the other symbols discussed above. Geometric designs rarely dominate a scene; instead, they seem in position to enhance particular aspects of the decoration but not to form the main elements. In fourteen instances, for example, painted bands surround or lie adjacent to a niche carved into one of the walls of a tomb (see fig. 3.4).[59] In other cases these bands lead from one niche to another (fig. 3.5). Painted bands were placed surrounding images of mausolea (haouanet 21, 26, Jbel el Mangoub) as well as adjacent to painted figures. The position of geometric motifs suggests that their purpose is to underscore the importance of other decorative elements. There is a statistical basis for this idea that geometric motifs act as emphatic decorative elements: they appear in all four haouanet with mausolea, nine of ten with animals, six of eight with human figures, and nine of twelve with columns. Geometric designs should therefore be regarded as a means for a painter to draw attention to particular aspects of the tombs that viewers were meant to notice.

59 These painted bands are also discussed by Habib Ben Younes, this volume.

Interior mouldings appear to perform a function similar to geometric designs. They appear most often when there is something else in the tomb to enhance, such as a human, animal, column, or mausoleum. All of these decorative elements should be considered as ordering mechanisms in the design, not simply filler motifs.

### *Included and Excluded Images: Some Conclusions about the Decorative Program at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech*

The preceding analysis has characterized the decorative program in the haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech through a study of the most frequently recurring design elements. As we have seen, elements such as humans, mausolea, and columns convey messages of wealth, power, and violence to viewers of the haouanet. Other symbols, such as animals and the niche-column combination, appear regularly and may be associated with protection of the tomb or cult practices. Several elements occur only once or twice in these two cemeteries; their rarity inclines against consideration of all of them at length, but brief mention of two of them, a ship and an inscription in the Libyan language, may be made. The meaning of these two images is likely consistent with the others discussed above. They call to mind what were probably specialized realms of knowledge in indigenous North African societies. The inscription signifies the use of writing, attested infrequently during the late first millennium B.C.E. The ship may connote connections with distant places; the haouanet are located close to the sea, though in many cases still separated from it by Punic coastal settlements. It may be possible to draw alternative interpretations of these symbols,[60] but the conclusions expressed here are consistent with the notion that the majority of the decoration on the walls of haouanet portrayed uncommon images, but still ones known to their builders.

Scenes of domestic life by contrast are not present or very rarely enter the decorative program at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech. Most of the human figures depicted on the walls of the haouanet, as discussed above, are engaged in confrontations. Animals are wild and ungovernable, as well as aggressive. In just two instances do they appear docile; those paintings show a rider on horseback and a scene of agricultural labour, with a human ploughing behind two oxen (hanout 55, Jbel el Mangoub).

A final point about the choice of design elements in the haouanet is appropriate. Although the fourth to second centuries B.C.E. witnessed the

60 In particular, some scholars have suggested that the ship represents a vessel in which the soul may journey to the underworld (Camps 1961b, 1987).

colonization of the region of lower Cap Bon by Carthage and then Rome, there is no evidence of external control at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech. Such control of the tombs would probably be manifested in much greater homogeneity in decorative choices, and might involve the use of specific symbols identified with the colonizing powers. The great differences in selection of design elements for the haouanet displayed in table 3.1 shows that there was no standard applied to tomb decoration, and therefore it is unlikely that any external influence was exerted regarding the choice of design elements. In addition, it is clear that the builders of haouanet at Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech utilized motifs from Punic and Mediterranean civilizations, but modified them to accommodate their own mortuary traditions, as for example in the placement of niches directly above columns and mausolea (figs. 3.4, 3.5). This variation and innovation seems to indicate that the builders of haouanet had a role in negotiating the meaning of the imported design elements. Whether the conclusions presented here are valid for haouanet in cemeteries other than Jbel el Mangoub and Latrech remains to be seen. It is clear that it will only be possible to conduct this sort of analysis when other cemeteries are studied and published in depth.

## *Conclusion*

In this paper I have attempted to show that no single approach – archaeological, textual, art historical, theoretical, or other – contains sufficient information to provide a coherent narrative of the haouanet on its own. Used in combination, however, these approaches demonstrate the ability to construct a much closer understanding of these tombs and their builders. Textual sources make it clear that haouanet should be considered as monuments that developed during a period of increasing appropriation of land by external powers. Landscape analyses suggest that the tombs, carved into prominent limestone outcrops, indicate that individuals wished to erect permanent and visible monuments at a time when indigenous societies were undergoing rapid social change. Such monuments could have served to identify the land as belonging to the individuals buried within the haouanet as well as to legitimize access to the land for their descendants. Art-historical studies indicate that decorative motifs were imported from other Mediterranean cultures and placed on the walls of these tombs. Acculturation is a complex process that cannot simply be explained by a discussion of the origins of new motifs. A comparative theoretical perspective implies that the builders of haouanet utilized new decorative motifs to make ideological statements that emphasized wealth, power, and violence

during a period of acculturation in the fourth, third, and second centuries B.C.E. My view does not dispute the ultimate outcome of colonization, which resulted in foreign control of this territory, but it does place indigenous inhabitants of North Africa in a dynamic and strategic relationship with Punic, Numidian, and Roman cultures, rather than envisaging them as passive recipients of others' ideas, symbols, and values.

These conclusions offer a substantially new vision of the late first millennium B.C.E. As I suggested in part 1 above, haouanet were constructed in response to the cultural and historical forces of the fourth, third, and second centuries B.C.E. Their status as monuments dependent on 'archaic Mediterranean cultural currents' should be re-evaluated.[61] In large part, they appear to have combined older traditions with new ideas emerging in this period. As I indicated in part 2, haouanet formed part of a new way of seeing the world that their builders considered proper at this time, not simply a continuation of what had always been done. The members of this group who first had the idea of incorporating columns, mausolea, and other external motifs into the designs on the walls of haouanet made an important break with the past. For whatever reasons this break was made, use of those motifs led to the development of a new funerary iconography that most likely became widespread over a period of many years.

It seems probable then that the new motifs represent part of a broader rethinking of identities on the part of the builders of haouanet, and a willingness to associate the dead, or at least some of them, with foreign cultures. As these shifts occurred, the indigenous societies of North Africa began to look more like inhabitants of other regions of the Mediterranean world. The haouanet demonstrate that these changes in material culture extended well beyond the ruling families of Numidia for whom this process has previously been attested. They also make it clear that foreign concepts were adopted from other Mediterranean cultures with modifications, a process visible on the walls of the haouanet. One further idea is important here. Some previous studies of haouanet have generally not regarded the haouanet as monuments associated with change, but seen them as part of 'mortuary practices that are in essence conservative.'[62] I have argued here that, on the contrary, the haouanet are clear indications of interaction and change, as well as continuity, during a period when indigenous and foreign cultures met in North Africa. On their walls a dialogue between new and old ways of thinking was carried out.

61 Camps 1987: 55; Camps and Longerstay 2000: 3374.
62 Ghaki 1999: 234.

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# 4

# The 'Mausoleum Culture' of Africa Proconsularis

*Jennifer P. Moore*

Within the borders of present-day Tunisia, over 340 mausolea from Roman times have been recorded to date. The people who had commissioned them held clear ideas about what these highly visible markers should communicate, ideas that their counterparts in other parts of the Roman world apparently shared. Yet this 'mausoleum culture' had its own vocabulary, preoccupations, and social implications in a combination that was particular to Africa Proconsularis. It was enabled by the unusual wealth of many of the region's inhabitants and perpetuated by social expectations and rivalry within this peer group. The roots of this value system are already detectable in tombs erected in the province during the Augustan and Julio-Claudian era, but the aesthetic reached full form during the later second and third centuries, the apogee of mausoleum construction in Africa Proconsularis.

The present study for the first time collects the evidence from hundreds of mausolea in order to elucidate the origins and manifestations of the mausoleum culture in Africa Proconsularis. Most scholars have not previously realized quite how ubiquitous these mausolea were and thereby have underestimated their social and physical significance. A mausoleum fulfilled a pervasive social expectation, one that was so engrained in the local attitude that the monument was able to convey the ideals of the peer group visually and from a distance. This chapter is intended to provide preliminary observations on the priorities of mausolea owners in the province of Africa Proconsularis.[1] The present study will limit its geographic survey to the part of Africa Proconsularis that was equivalent to

1 I intend to provide a more detailed examination of these monuments and their place in the Roman world at large as a separate and longer study.

Figure 4.1 'Neopunic' tower-mausoleum at Makthar (photo J. Moore)

the northern half of present-day Tunisia. This is a practical decision, since the monuments there have survived in greater quantities, have been more accessible, and as a result are better published than their eastern Algerian counterparts.

Though many types of mausolea were built in Africa Proconsularis, this chapter will concentrate on the two most prevalent types of mausoleum in the province: tower-mausolea and temple-mausolea. Both were tall monuments, standing two or more storeys high. A tower-mausoleum had solid facades, a square or near-square floor plan, and a pyramidal roof (fig. 4.1). In contrast, a temple-mausoleum is so called because its lowest storey resembles a temple podium, while its second storey recalls a temple cella, preceded by columns (fig. 4.2). The roof of a temple-mausoleum is pitched, forming a pediment on the front and rear facades, while the floor plan is rectangular.

In terms of construction materials, both tower- and temple-mausolea were built of ashlar masonry, mortar-and-rubble, or, infrequently, a mix-

Figure 4.2 'Tetrastyle' temple-mausoleum at Haïdra (photo J. Moore)

ture of the two (either *opus africanum* or ashlar for the lower courses and mortar-and-rubble for the upper levels). To a certain extent, local factors dictated the materials: as preserved, the ashlar constructions are most common in the interior of Tunisia, where nearby limestone quarries provided a ready and durable material, while mortar-and-rubble or sandstone ashlars, both usually coated with plaster, are more characteristic of the northern and coastal regions.

Of the two tomb types, only the tower-mausoleum developed from local pre-Roman traditions in North Africa. As such, its manifestations in the pre-Roman period are worth considering.

## Background: Pre-Roman Mausolea

During the third and second centuries B.C.E., a number of individuals across much of North Africa commissioned tower-mausolea, adapting architectural styles of the eastern Mediterranean to local African tastes and

materials. The tower-mausoleum best preserved today is the three-storey monument at Dougga (ancient Thugga),[2] but remains of several smaller tower-mausolea and depictions of similar structures in tomb drawings indicate that these funerary monuments were familiar structures across much of North Africa, from at least Siga in Algeria to Sabratha in Libya.[3] Both free-standing and relief sculpture adorned the exterior of such monuments; at Dougga, for instance, statues of a lion, winged females, and horsemen, and reliefs of *quadrigae* adorned the upper storeys.

The owners of these tombs remain anonymous. Epigraphy survives only from the tower-mausoleum at Dougga; it preserves the names of the builders and craftsmen of that monument, but not the name of the deceased.[4] In the absence of specific identities for these mausoleum owners, there has been some temptation to associate these tower-mausolea with important local individuals who had been exposed to Hellenizing influences. In particular, Friedrich Rakob has characterized monumental funerary structures from pre-Roman Numidia as being royal and dynastic.[5] Thus, among tower-mausolea, the structure at Siga in Algeria has been associated with the Massylian king Vermina (201–191 B.C.E.), the 'Libyco-Numidian' mausoleum at Dougga in Tunisia with Masinissa (201–149 B.C.E.), and the Es Soumâa mausoleum at El Khroub in Algeria with Masinissa's successor, Micipsa (148–118 B.C.E.).[6] Other evidence for a Numidian ruler cult might seem to support such associations.[7]

In reality, unfortunately, there are no links between these mausolea and any specific person or rank, let alone some of the most famous North African kings of antiquity. Furthermore, tower-mausolea are also found within territories that were Punic[8] or that cannot necessarily be defined as Numidian or Punic. If the Numidian tower-mausolea found in present-day Algeria and western Tunisia were royal prerogatives, what is to be made

2 Guérin 1862 2: 120–22; Ferron 1969–70. Though the monument has been reassembled, the reconstruction uses original materials and appears to be accurate.

3 For structural remains, two important contributors are Poinssot and Salomonson (1963) and Rakob (1979), who also compares ancient depictions.

4 Ferron 1969–70.

5 Rakob 1979, esp. 132–71, and reconstructions in the same volume; Horn and Rüger 1979: 450–53, 456–57, and 462–63.

6 E.g., Picard and Picard 1980: 15; Fedak 1990: 134, 135, and 137.

7 Using epigraphic evidence, Rives (2001) credited the success of the imperial cult in early Roman Africa to a translation of priesthoods from local, pre-Roman ruler cults. He was tentative about identifying the 'great monumental tombs of Numidia' as centres for ruler cult (2001: 429).

8 As Ferchiou (1995: 124) has pointed out, monarchic associations do not work well for the tower-mausolea that are located within Punic territory.

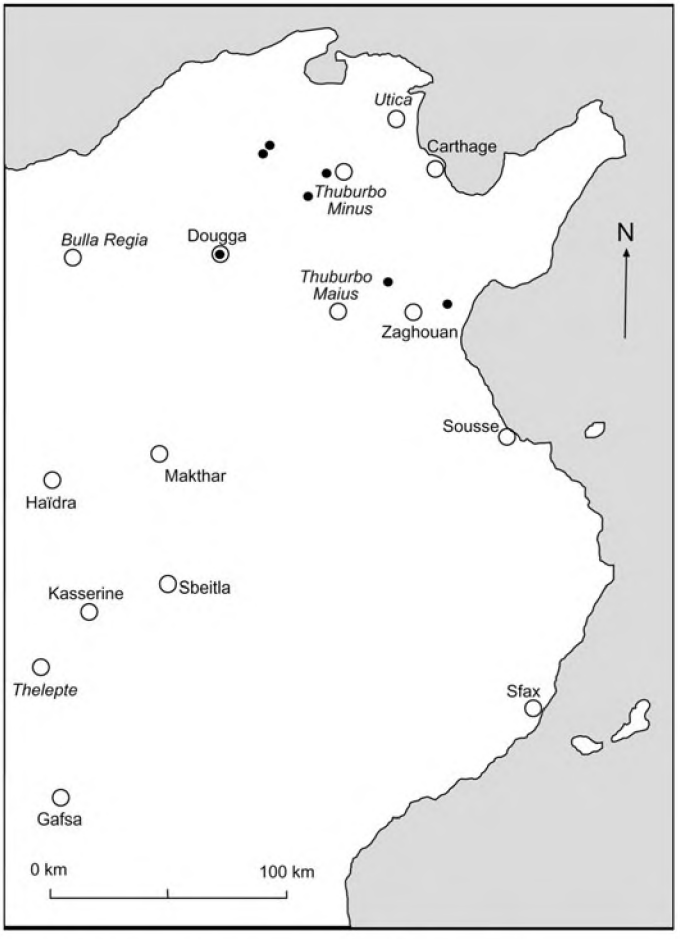


Figure 4.3 Distribution of pre-Roman mausolea in Tunisia

of tower-mausolea such as Mausoleum B at Sabratha in Libya, that at Ksar Chenane in northern Tunisia, or the tower-mausoleum at Henchir Bourgou, on the Tunisian island of Jerba?[9] In fact, of all tower-mausolea in North Africa, the greatest density was in the northern region of what

9 Sabratha: Di Vita 1976; Ksar Chenane: Peyras 1991: 45; Henchir Bourgou: Heyder 1985 and Weriemmi-Akkari 1985. Caution dictates against assuming that the local cultures of Jerba and Libya were identical to the Numidians who lived west of the territory of Punic Carthage.

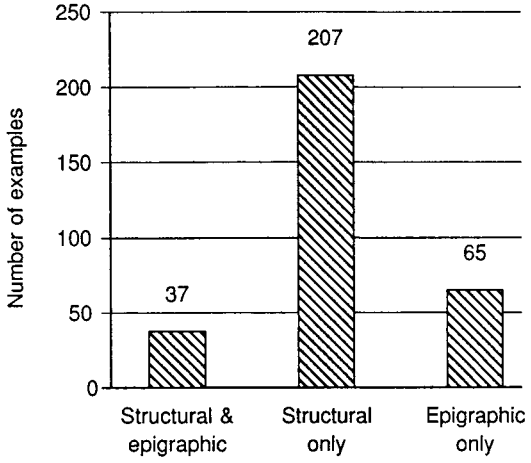


Figure 4.4 Recorded structural and epigraphic evidence for Roman-period mausolea in Tunisia

is now Tunisia, with Dougga as the most westerly example (fig. 4.3). In other words, the majority of the known tombs were within Carthaginian territory or on its western borders with Numidia, unlikely places for indigenous kings to be buried. The earliest mausolea of the Roman period, examined below, also raise doubts about the link between famous kings and tower-mausolea; instead, the evidence suggests that the people who commissioned such structures did so to make specific social statements, not to identify themselves as rulers.

## Nature of the Evidence for Roman Mausolea

In Tunisia, the evidence for mausolea of Roman date consists of both structural and epigraphic remains, although both types of evidence survive for a single monument in only 11 per cent of the cases (fig 4.4). The vast majority of mausolea, some 70 per cent, survive only as structural remains. In the remaining 19 per cent of instances, epigraphy alone indicates a mausoleum; these inscriptions either refer directly to the mausoleum on which they were erected, or are inscribed on an architectural fragment that most likely originated from a large tomb. In such cases, one cannot discern what type of mausoleum originally held the inscription.

Much of the physical evidence that was published in the 1800s is now lost, primarily because the building materials have been recycled for more

recent constructions. Unfortunately, many of those early reports merely noted the existence of a mausoleum at a given site, without further description. Other early publications provided more detail for some mausolea that now no longer survive, but sometimes questionable or conflicting reports arose. For instance, at the turn of the last century, such divergent drawings were made of the mausoleum at Henchir es Somâa that in 1982 Naïdé Ferchiou had to devote an entire study to reconciling the evidence.

Today, the most visible and well-known Roman mausolea are the Mausoleum of the Flavii at Kasserine (ancient Cillium), the so-called Neopunic Mausoleum at Makthar (Mactaris) (fig. 4.1), and examples at Haïdra (Ammaedara) (including the mausoleum in fig. 4.2). In the past two decades, both national and international survey projects have enhanced the picture provided by these familiar monuments and by the nineteenth-century reports.[10] Now, at over 340 known examples, the sheer number of mausolea indicates that monumental tombs were familiar landmarks throughout the countryside, apparently more so than in most other parts of the Roman world, and that these monuments had vast and complex social implications. The structures are fairly consistent in presentation, sharing several common features that were already present in the earliest mausolea of the Roman period in Africa.

## Early Roman Mausolea in Africa Proconsularis

Ferchiou (1986, 1987) has identified three tower-mausolea as dating to the Augustan or Julio-Claudian period, based on architectural details, epigraphic dating conventions, and associated pottery. These tombs, the Anonymous Mausoleum and that of T. Helvacius Papia at Zanfour (ancient Assuras) and the so-called Mausoleum of Q. Annaeus Balbus Faventinus at Thuburnica,[11] are the only ones known to date from the first century

10 Two important regional surveys are those of Segermes (Dietz, Sebaï, and Ben Hassen 1995; Ørsted et al. 2000) and Rohia (Ben Baaziz 2000b). The Tunisian Institut National du Patrimoine is also in the process of publishing a multi-volume *Carte nationale des sites archéologiques et des monuments historiques*, which involves new surveys of ruins within regions that have been designated by 1:50,000-scale maps of Tunisia; cf. Ben Baaziz (1990–91) for a description of this project.

11 Architecturally, details of the mausoleum at Thuburnica parallel those at Zanfour and fit with an early imperial date, while the inscription naming Annaeus Balbus (*CIL* 8.14697), found separately, is Julio-Claudian (cf. Ferchiou 1986). Despite the fact that the inscription was found some two kilometres from the mausoleum at Thuburnica, Ferchiou (1986) and Pikhaus (1993: 139–40) reconstructed the two as belonging together. Bentivogli (2004: 431–32) was more sceptical that the inscription belonged to this particular mausoleum, as opposed to any of the four that Carton had noted along the

C.E. in Africa Proconsularis. As such, they provide a chronological link between the pre-Roman tower-mausolea and those erected more commonly in the Roman province at the height of the Empire. Ferchiou has rightly suggested that at least two of the three individuals who built these tombs at Thuburnica and Zanfour were not indigenous, based on their nomenclature and the military career of Annaeus Balbus.[12] These men were possibly involved in reorganizing the African province in the early Roman Empire and settled in these towns as a result of their duties.

The locations of these tombs are noteworthy, as they break significantly from the pattern of mausolea pre-dating the fall of Carthage; the majority of those pre-Roman mausolea had been located within or on the borders of Carthaginian territory. In the Roman period, the earliest-known mausolea, those at Thuburnica and Zanfour, were located outside the Punic border zone, at the western edge of the new African province. If Helvacius Papia and Annaeus Balbus had come to Africa to implement a new administration, they apparently retired at these two towns at the extremities of the new territory and eventually had their tombs built there.

As precursors to the apex of mausoleum construction in the mid-Empire, the Thuburnica and Zanfour mausolea relied upon much earlier, local funerary structures for inspiration in design. Their builders were likely locals, since they followed the pattern of pre-Roman mausolea in Africa, constructing the mausolea in tower form with a pyramidal roof,[13] and making their measurements using the Punic rather than the Roman foot.[14] All three mausolea contained cremations, which were placed in niches with flat floors, as opposed to the depressed floors that would later typify ossuary niches in many mausolea of the middle Empire.[15]

The so-called Mausoleum of Annaeus Balbus at Thuburnica also followed pre-Roman examples in having sculptural ornamentation at several levels, including reliefs of wind gods and of the heads of a lion, ram,

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ancient road between Thuburnica and Ad Aquas (Carton 1915: 209–10). In that case, at least two mausolea were erected at or near Thuburnica in the first century C.E.: the mausoleum at Thuburnica and one located further outside the town and belonging to Annaeus Balbus.

12 No epigraphy survives for the Anonymous Mausoleum at Zanfour, hence its name.

13 The superstructure of the Mausoleum of Helvacius Papia does not survive, but its square plan adheres to the pattern of tower-mausolea dating to both before and after the fall of Carthage.

14 The Punic foot is equivalent to 0.515 m, the Roman foot to 0.296 m, according to Euzennat and Hallier 1992: 241.

15 Ferchiou 1987: 776, 787.

and bull.[16] As relief sculpture, this ornamentation is less prominent than the free-standing sculpture that adorned the tower-mausoleum at Dougga; there was now a new sculptural focus. Setting a new trend, the builders of this mausoleum opened up the upper storey in the form of a large bay, suitable for displaying a portrait statue of the deceased. This opening naturally attracts the viewers' eyes and directs their attention to the representation of the tomb owner. Though such statues are rarely preserved with the North African mausolea,[17] the effect would have been comparable to that of temple-mausolea at Sarsina and Cologne.[18]

A second new trait, this time demonstrated by the Anonymous Mausoleum at Zanfour, also had pre-existing parallels outside North Africa: the ground around the monument at Zanfour was paved, covering over access to the burial in the lower chamber and thereby protecting it.[19] The pavement additionally served to mark off a sacred funerary *area* for the tomb, almost like a *temenos*.[20] This and similar types of segregation would also become common in the later Roman mausolea in Africa, as will be demonstrated below.

By introducing a prominently displayed portrait statue and enclosing the *area*, the owners of these early Roman mausolea were casting greater emphasis upon themselves, implying that they had accomplished tremendous feats and likening their monuments to hero shrines. The individuals involved did not invent these changes; they were adapting a local architectural tradition to foreign aesthetics.

Yet if one follows the common thinking that the pre-Roman examples were royal prerogatives, the immigrant owners of the mausolea at Thuburnica and Zanfour would have been taking bold political and social steps by employing the tower type of mausoleum for their tombs. Annaeus Balbus, a veteran and *duumvir*, and Helvacius Papia, whom Ferchiou suspected was a freedman,[21] would surely have committed an outrageous act had they

16 Ferchiou 1986: fig. 31. The presence of a lion on this monument serves as a reminder that lions do not necessarily indicate a royal presence.

17 The statues for these early Roman mausolea do not survive; statues preserved in context with mid-Roman mausolea are noted below.

18 Respectively, Toynbee 1971: 131 and pl. 37, and von Elbe 1995: 36–37.

19 Fedak (1990) recorded a number of tombs with enclosures or platforms in the Near East and eastern Mediterranean, including the Tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadai, mid-6th century B.C.E. in date (252–53 and fig. 4), the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus of the 4th century B.C.E. (73 and fig. 79b–c), and Hellenistic cella temple-tombs in Zawani, near Cyrene (393 and fig. 164).

20 In a funerary context, the Latin word *area* refers to a cemetery enclosure. When this ancient usage is meant, the word will appear in italics.

21 Ferchiou 1987: 783.

commissioned for themselves funerary structures that had previously been reserved for kings. Yet, far from being appalled, the townspeople of Assuras built their town up around the two mausolea there, contravening a custom held by both the Punic and Roman cultures, that burials should be at the edges of a city; the monuments may even have been worshipped as founder's shrines.[22] As such, these examples cast further doubt upon the suggested association between monarchs and tower-mausolea. At least some of the pre-Roman mausolea must have belonged not to kings, but to the elite. If wealth and social standing were the key requirements for building a tower-mausoleum, then the early Roman mausolea at Thuburnica and Zanfour were appropriate and acceptable constructions, rather than signs of blatant disrespect for local traditions. These mausolea then set the stage for the monumental tombs of the second and third centuries C.E. in Africa Proconsularis.

## Tower- and Temple-Mausolea in the Second and Third Centuries C.E.

Chronological assessments of mausolea of the imperial period are limited, since only a handful of the structures has ever undergone even partial excavation and most had already been plundered before being recorded. Relative dating is therefore the most common technique for establishing chronology and is usually based upon either stylistic traits of the architecture and decor or upon epigraphic indicators. Based on such assessments, the majority of datable mausolea from this region belong to the late second and third centuries C.E.

From the Roman period, over one-quarter of the more than 340 structural remains are well enough preserved and documented to be identifiable as one of the two predominant mausoleum types from this province, the tower-mausoleum and temple-mausoleum. The two types survive in approximately equal numbers in Tunisia.[23] The first type, the tower-mausoleum, followed in the path of the early Roman examples at Zanfour and Thuburnica; a well-preserved example is the so-called Neopunic Mausoleum at Makthar (fig. 4.1). Although the early Roman tower-mausolea had contained cremation burials, the mid-Roman

22 Ibid.: 784.

23 There are also other mausoleum types known in Africa Proconsularis (e.g., circular, hexagonal, and square one-storied constructions), some of which will be relevant to certain discussions below, but the focus will mainly be on the tower-mausoleum and the temple-mausoleum.

tower-mausolea could be designed to accommodate cremations or inhumations, as is also true of the second major mausoleum type.[24]

This second type, the temple-mausoleum, is exemplified by the 'Tetrastyle' Mausoleum at Haïdra (fig. 4.2). The temple-type mausoleum was new to the area and had likely been exported from the European provinces, where there are clear parallels from the early imperial period on.[25] However, despite the use of this type in the western European provinces during the first century C.E.,[26] all known examples from Africa Proconsularis date to the second and third centuries. Africa Proconsularis was not alone in adopting the temple-mausoleum relatively late; the type also appeared for the first time in the second or third centuries in certain parts of the East, such as at Palmyra.[27] However, at that city, temple-mausolea in the European style completely replaced the tower-mausolea in eastern style in the first half of the second century C.E. While one might interpret such a replacement in the East as evidence of growing Roman influence, the same cannot be said for Africa Proconsularis, where the temple-mausoleum and tower-mausoleum were built contemporaneously and apparently in approximately equal numbers in the mid-Empire.[28]

During the mid-imperial period, the focus of both tower- and temple-mausolea was the upper storey, which contained the statue of the tomb owner (potentially accompanied by statues of others who were also interred

24 Further investigation should elucidate reasons for the distinction between mausolea that have a solid core and were erected over top of a subterranean burial chamber, and mausolea that are completely above-ground and incorporate the burial chamber within their ground floor; both options are attested for each of the two main types of mausolea. In both types of mausolea, the interior walls commonly include niches for ossuaries or *loculi* for inhumations.

25 E.g., von Elbe 1995: 36–37. Although the temple-mausoleum was new to Africa Proconsularis, the general appearance of a solid façade at ground level and the open colonnade in the upper level was already familiar from some earlier local monuments, such as the 'Numidian' altar at Chemtou and that at Kbor Klib (for these monuments, cf. Rakob 1979: 120–23). The 'altar' at Kbor Klib is the only pre-imperial monument in its area that both approaches the general appearance of the temple-type mausoleum and may be funerary in nature (cf. Ferchiou 1991).

26 E.g., von Elbe 1995: 36–37. Though the western European provinces almost certainly adopted the temple-mausoleum from the Hellenistic Aegean, the introduction of this tomb type to North Africa should be seen as coming from the Roman provinces rather than from the eastern Mediterranean directly.

27 Schmidt-Colinet 1997: 159.

28 In Africa Proconsularis, the mausoleum type was apparently not dictated by the type of burial (inhumation versus cremation), regional preferences, or by whether the mausoleum was located within a cemetery or not; the choice seems to have been made more on an individual basis.

Figure 4.5 Relief above the doorway of the Mausoleum of the Iulii at Makthar, showing preparations for sacrific (photo J. Moore)

within). These elements rarely survive in context with their mausolea; the best-preserved statues recorded *in situ* are the charioteer and his wife from the Yasmina necropolis at Carthage, which Naomi Norman and Anne Haeckl suggest were locally sculpted and stylistically date to between 217 and 238 C.E.[29] Statue fragments were also found in the vicinity of the Mausoleum of the Iulii at Makthar and the mausolea at Henchir Zourzour and Segermes D 14-4. The epitaphs at Ksar el Ghoul and of the Flavian Mausoleum at Kasserine specifically direct the viewer's attention to such sculpture, again emphasizing the importance of the individual who was interred within.[30]

The early Roman mausolea at Thuburnica and Zanfour had foreshadowed the dominance of the statue of the tomb owner over other decorative elements; indeed, relief sculpture is recorded at only a fraction of the mausolea of any architectural type from Africa Proconsularis. In almost every case, the sculpture belongs to the Graeco-Roman repertoire of funerary art. The most common motifs for stone or stucco reliefs appear to have been garlands, sometimes flanked by Erotes with down-turned torches,[31]

29 Norman and Haeckl 1993: 242.

30 *CIL* 8.211 l. 46 and *CIL* 8.16270 respectively; the statues themselves do not survive.

31 Garlands are attested on the mausoleum at Bit el Hajar, the Mausoleum of C. Marius Romanus at Henchir el Khima, two mausolea at Haïdra, and the Mausoleum of the Iulii at Makthar. Examples of Erotes with garlands are attested at the tower-mausoleum at Haïdra and the ashlar monument at the Yasmina Necropolis at Carthage.

or floral motifs.[32] In the region of Makthar, scenes of bull sacrifice or the ensuing banquet adorned at least four mausolea (fig. 4.5).[33] Other individuals chose subject matter that appealed to them on a more personal level, such as Dionysiac or zodiac themes.[34] At most mausolea, however, no relief decoration is evident, even on well-preserved monuments.

## Situation of Mausolea in the Landscape

During the course of the late second and third centuries, mausolea were constructed in almost every zone of Africa Proconsularis (fig. 4.6). Following the examples of the early Roman tombs at Thuburnica and Zanfour, they spread to occupy the expanding Roman province and its borders, instead of being confined to the more traditional Punic domain and the border zone of Numidia. Mausolea dotted the southern borders of the province, at sites such as Thelepte, Gafsa, and Bir Oum Ali. However, the greatest density of mausolea, as preserved, was within the zones formerly belonging to the Carthaginians or bordering Numidia, particularly within the fertile grain belt of the Bagradas valley.

Most mausolea were sited within one of two locations, either in cemeteries outside towns or in isolation in the countryside. Even when cemeteries associated with towns included mausolea, as was the case at fourteen towns at least, the large tombs may have predated other grave types. Thus, the Mausoleum 20 at Leptiminus Site 10 stood on its own for perhaps some decades before cupula graves were built in the same enclosure.[35] As many as nine mausolea stood among the graves in a cemetery to the west of Gemellae (modern Sidi Aïsch),[36] and more than twice that many in the necropolis at Henchir el Makbara.[37] City-dwellers might also place their mausolea along the main transportation routes just outside the town. As at

32 For instance, at the mausoleum at El Bouia and the Mausoleum of Q. Iunius Rogatus at Sidi Aïsch.

33 The bull sacrifice scenes are on the Mausoleum of the Iulii, the 'Neopunic' Mausoleum, and a third, unpublished mausoleum at Makthar; the banquet scene appears on the mausoleum at nearby Bit el Hajar. The three published examples all date to the third century, the mausoleum at Bit el Hajar and the Mausoleum of the Iulii to the first half of that century.

34 At the Dionysiac Mausoleum at Makthar and the mausoleum at Henchir Messaour, respectively. For further descriptions of stone reliefs on funerary monuments in Tunisia, cf. Ferchiou 1995.

35 Ben Lazreg, Mattingly, and Stirling 1992. The chronology of graves within cemeteries at other sites is not as clear, but cupulae are the most common grave type found with mausolea.

36 Cagnat 1885: 176.

37 Ben Baaziz 2000a: 21–22, site 112.012.

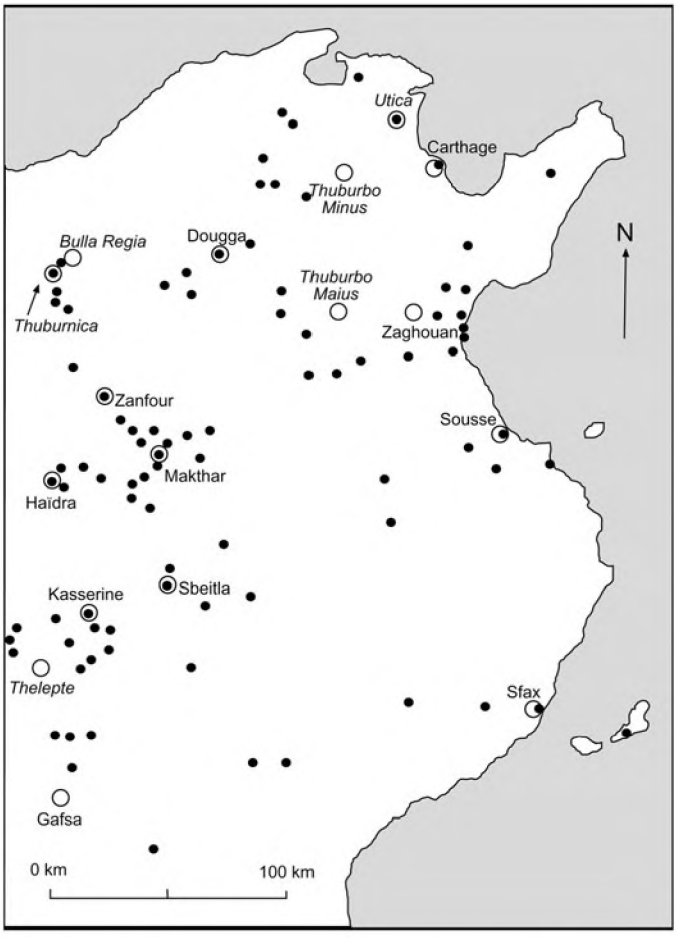


Figure 4.6 Distribution of Roman mausolea in Tunisia. Some of the unmarked areas have not undergone extensive survey and may also contain numerous examples of mausolea.

Rome, mausolea lined the roadways leading up to city gates at such sites as Haïdra and Henchir Mest (Mustis),[38] and one Namphamo proudly recorded that his mausoleum was built at the juncture of the town wall of Macota

38 For Haïdra, cf. Saladin 1887: 186.

(modern Maghrawa) and its road.[39] Nevertheless, these urban-oriented mausolea seem to have been the exception.

The more common situation for a mausoleum was an isolated location, separate from any other structures and placed in a remote yet visually prominent position in the landscape. At most ancient sites, there is only one mausoleum recorded, standing in isolation; at sites with more than one mausoleum, the mausolea are most often not in close proximity to one another or any other structures.[40] These cases are particularly known from the fertile grain belt of Tunisia and symbolize the wealth of Africa Proconsularis, which was primarily derived from agricultural pursuits. Even those landowners whose property was near a town erected their tombs on their own land. For instance, the poem on the Mausoleum of the Flavii at Kasserine proudly proclaimed that the monument had been erected on the estate of its owner,[41] near the ancient town of Cillium.

In the immediate vicinity of the Flavian Mausoleum, there is no trace of other graves or activity in antiquity;[42] in this regard, it fits the pattern of large-scale funerary monuments in Africa Proconsularis. Most were quite remote, yet not out of view: they were often situated high up on slopes or hilltops, with commanding views of the landscape, or were the tallest structures dominating a plain. This tendency is predictable enough that Gerner Hansen was able to identify some dozen structural finds from the Segermes Survey as mausolea, despite minimal remains.[43] In late antiquity and after the Arab conquest, locals in some areas recognized the advantages of these tall structures that dominated the local landscape and converted the mausolea into military lookouts or fortification towers.[44]

Like the Flavian Mausoleum at Cillium, the examples from the Segermes region exemplify a preference among landowners to have their mausolea located on their own property. In part, these African mausolea

39 *CIL* 8.688: 'usque ad murum [p]ublicum et semitam vicinalem.'

40 This number must come with the caveat that most mausolea survive well above the present-day ground level, while any smaller grave types in the environs may well remain buried and unobserved.

41 *CIL* 8.212 lines 51–53 and 58–61; *CIL* 8.213 ll. 7–10.

42 Guéry and Hallier 1993: 58.

43 Segermes B 11-3, B 16-2, C 10-3, H 18-1, K 15-3, L 9-2, N 15-2, 13-1, Q 12-3, R 8-2, R 10-1, and probably L 12-2, O 14-1, and O 14-3.

44 Roman mausolea were converted into military towers at Ksar el Oglat, Ksar Mdedja, Ksar Soudane, and Henchir Semmacher; cf.*BAC* 1890: 233 n. 19 and Cagnat and Gauckler 1898: 147–48. The Arabic word transliterated as *ksar* (plural *ksour*) refers to a stronghold fortified especially for the defence of agricultural products, and forms part of the Arabic name given to at least 32 Roman mausolea in Tunisia.

reflect ideals in line with those of Latin pastoral poetry, which expresses a city-dweller's desire to escape the stresses and bustle of city life for what was (erroneously) believed to be the leisurely life of the countryside. In fact, the poet who was commissioned for the Flavian mausoleum at Kasserine took care to segregate his client's values from typical urban preferences for empty luxuries, like gold or silver, or ephemeral fashions, such as Greek boys, Campanian wine, and Spanish olives.[45] Instead, according to the poems, it was far wiser to invest in an indestructible mausoleum, a permanent home that protected one from the wasteful *furor*, and that was located adjacent to a grove, babbling brooks, and beehives.[46]

Despite this picture of escape from the pressures of society, mausoleum owners did not want completely remote locations for their resting places. Not only did they choose locations that dominated the landscape, but they also sited their mausolea within view of major transportation routes, where the monuments could make an impression on passersby and provide convenient landmarks for travellers.[47] Bruce Hitchner has suggested that the great tombs may even have marked boundaries and properties.[48] To take this suggestion further, the mausolea served to confront the passing traveller with the accomplishments and landed possessions of their owners. They were therefore not only visible from the road, but were also directed towards the road. This second element was key; it explains why there was no standard orientation for mausolea in this province, although a generally eastern orientation seems to have been preferable.[49] While a mausoleum was a daily fixture on the horizon for those who worked the land, it was sited with concern for those who were travelling by, including peers and business affiliates of the landowner, civic potentates, and others whose respect was desirable.

## Ritual Use of the Mausoleum?

Based on appearances, the mausolea were designed for worshipping the dead interred within. In presentation, the visual focal point of both tower-

45 *CIL* 8.212 ll. 21–37.

46 *CIL* 8.213 ll. 17–21 and 9–10, respectively.

47 The nearest recorded remains to mausolea at Magdoudeche, Henchir Soma Oum Ali, and one located between Thelepte and Bir Oum Ali were mile markers.

48 Hitchner 1990: 244.

49 Orientation is recorded for 43 mausolea, of which 31 face east, south-east, or north-east. Though only 8 face due east, tomb architects may have tried to construct mausolea both facing the road and with an easterly orientation whenever possible.

and temple-mausolea had not changed since Helvacius Papia had built his tomb at Assuras in the first century: a statue portraying the tomb owner stood high above the viewer in the second storey or, in taller structures, the third storey. To emphasize the point, the inscription from the Mausoleum of the Flavii at Kasserine asserts that the height of a mausoleum signified its owner's status, providing another explanation for the popularity of the tall tower- and temple-mausolea in North Africa.[50]

The reliefs of bull sacrifices and banquets that were featured on mausolea in the Makthar region point to lavish ritual meals in celebration of the dead (fig. 4.5). Scholars including Picard and Ferchiou have interpreted these scenes as depictions of the Rosalia, a Roman funerary festival.[51] In the countryside of this region, where even the fertile areas do not support large herds of cattle today, the sacrifice of a bull for such a festival would have brought even more prestige to the mausoleum's occupant.

Other components of the mausolea suggest that formal worship of the tomb owner was expected, not only through normal rites of the dead, but with an aura of heroic or near-divine status for the deceased. As with the early Anonymous Mausoleum at Zanfour, the funerary ground was often formally segregated by means of encapsulating the mausoleum within a sacred *area*. At ten sites, such structures stood within a walled enclosure,[52] and nine other sites had mausolea on a podium or platform.[53] Since most mausolea have not been excavated, such *areae* may in fact have been more prevalent.[54]

Epitaphs also sometimes elevated the mausolea to a sacred level beyond that of the average funerary monument. At Dougga, an epitaph expresses hopes for the eternal glory of a mausoleum there and urges the descendants of the deceased to sanctify the deceased. Some epitaphs speak of dedicating the mausoleum, much as one would a temple,[55] while the poem

50 Hitchner 1995: 497; *CIL* 8.212A ll. 79–85.

51 Picard et al. 1970: 131–32; Ferchiou 1995: 123.

52 Henchir Brichou, Henchir Sommet el Amra, Ksar bou Derhem, Ksar Khelifa Zinati, Leptiminus Site 10, Magdoudeche, Segermes C 10-3 and O 10-1, Sidi el Hani, and possibly also Kasserine KS 007.

53 Mausolea were placed on a podium or platform at Bir el Hafei, Henchir Chett, Henchir el Ktib, Henchir Zaatli, Ksar bou Derhem, Lalla Messaouda, Segermes G 18-2, Sidi Aissa, and possibly Segermes C 11-2.

54 Ferchiou 1995: 116.

55 Mausoleum of M. Iulius Dativus at Carthage, Mausoleum of L. Iulius Felix Cupitianus Mellitus at Dougga, Henchir Hamouda, three examples at Sidi Aisch (Mausoleum of C. Iulius Rogatus, Mausoleum of Q. Iunius Rogatus and that of the Valerii), and the Flavian Mausoleum at Kasserine.

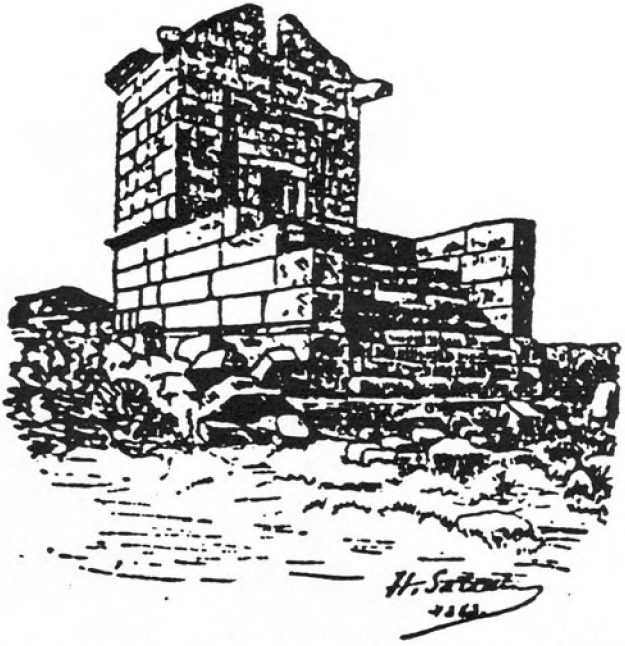

Figure 4.7 Temple-mausoleum at Henchir Zaatli (from Saladin 1887, 131, fig. 230)

on the Flavian Mausoleum at Kasserine specifically calls that structure *non monimenta patri, sed nova templa*, 'not a monument for the father [of the tomb's commissioner], but a new sanctuary.'[56]

While many of those flirtations with the divine involve tower-type mausolea, the temple-mausoleum is even more clearly drawn into the realm of formal worship of the dead. At least ten temple-mausolea had stairs leading up to the main chamber or *cella*.[57] In a minimum of thirteen other cases, the investigators were even uncertain as to whether the structures were true temples or mausolea built in the form of a temple (fig. 4.7).[58]

Nevertheless, surprisingly little evidence survives for ritual worship of any type at mausolea. Altars accompanied the cylindrical mausoleum at

56 *CIL* 8.213 l. 4.

57 Bir el Hafei, Bou Arada, El Marouga, Henchir Abid, Henchir el Ktib, Henchir Hamouda, Henchir Kamor, Henchir Zaatli, Magdoudeche, and perhaps at Lalla Messaouda.

58 Aïn Bourbita, Aïn es Smara, Bir Magra, Bordj Sidi Mrad, mausoleum located between El Ksour and Rohia, Henchir Barouch, Henchir en Naam, Henchir Meded, Henchir Semmacher, Kef Chouchane, Ksar Khelifa Zinati, Ksar Mouro, and Ksar Soudane.

Ksar el Mnara,[59] the Mausoleum of Caesetia Ingenua at Carthage, that of Licinius Donatus at Haïdra, and the Mausoleum of Nunnia Primitiva at Makthar. However, it is debatable whether these altars were meant to be used for sacrifices or only to provide a decorative epigraphic support for the epitaphs of the deceased. At other sites, libation tubes allowed survivors to deliver their liquid or food offerings directly to the interior of the mausoleum. Such fixtures survive in mausolea at Henchir el Melia, Henchir Ksour Lakhoua, and at the Yasmina necropolis at Carthage.[60] As a whole, however, altars and libation tubes survive at an insignificant proportion of the sites. No examples of offering tables (*mensae*) are recorded.

Other evidence for offerings at mausolea should include pottery, such as offering dishes, cups, incense burners, vessels for preparing and cooking offerings, oil lamps, and jars for oils, perfumes, and food and drink. Because very few mausolea have been excavated and many more have been plundered, such pottery is rarely found within the monuments.[61] However, at the majority of the mausolea, any ritual meals or offerings that were made after the tomb was sealed would have been placed outside the mausoleum.[62] Normally ceramics derived from such visitations litter the ground around cemeteries and are evident today in ground surveys, especially in present-day agricultural zones where ploughing has churned the soil, as is precisely the current situation in Tunisia for many mausolea. However, the expected pottery is quite uncommon in and around the mausolea of Africa Proconsularis, suggesting that offerings were made there on neither a large-scale nor a frequent basis.[63]

In all, there is little evidence that survivors regularly came to mausolea to pay cult. What then should be made of the bull sacrifice and banqueting reliefs from Makthar and nearby Bit el Hajar? They may not be so literal as

59 For instance, Saladin (1887: 2) believed that the altars at Ksar el Mnara, small and each inscribed with a person's name, might have been commemorative rather than functional.

60 At Henchir Ksour Lakhoua and the Yasmina necropolis at least, the mausolea with libation tubes had cremation burials; the method of burial at Henchir el Melia is not clear.

61 Excavations of the early Roman mausoleum of T. Helvacius Papia at Zanfour revealed an ossuary, unguentaria, thin-walled ware, a lamp, coarseware jars, and a glass vase.

62 Almost all of the mausolea are too small to have allowed people to gather inside; even in the case of multiple burials over time within a single monument, most of the regular visitations must have taken place outside the monument.

63 For instance, only a sparse quantity of pottery was found in the vicinity of the mausolea studied in the Segermes Survey, often consisting of a few fragments of African Red Slip ware that dated a century or more later than the mausolea themselves – that is, there was no pottery on the surface nearby that dated to the apparent funerary use of the mausoleum itself.

to record annual celebrations of the dead; there are at least two alternative ways to view these scenes. First, the bull-sacrifice reliefs from Makthar may have been meant to remind people of a single lavish funerary banquet that accompanied the burial of the deceased, paid for by the estate of the deceased or his survivors. Beyond honouring the dead, such feasts, including one known from an inscription on a mausoleum at Althiburos,[64] were occasions for family and community to come together. They need not have taken place at the site of burial, but at a location more appropriate to preparing and hosting an extensive meal. Second, the reliefs may have been intended to perpetuate in stone a feast that the survivors did not actually hold in life, at least on a regular basis. Either way, it is no coincidence that all four reliefs come from the Makthar region. After one tomb owner had put such a scene on his mausoleum, his peers clearly wanted to demonstrate their ability to do the same, whether the content of the relief reflected real practice or not.

In all, the provision of a sacred monument and space seems to contradict its lack of use by survivors. This conflict is alleviated if one thinks of the funerary *area* first and foremost as a sacred place set aside for burials. Most mausolea in Africa Proconsularis were apparently situated on private estates, not in cemeteries or near other structures; they were not as accessible as burial structures located in the immediate vicinity of a town and, from a practical viewpoint, did not lend themselves to regular visits or large gatherings. Even if they were components of a *villa rustica* with its own mini-population, the mausolea were not located at a convenient gathering point on the estate. Their remoteness was part of the aesthetic. The location and message of the tomb was apparently more important than worshipping the deceased, though the pretense of an active cult was still incorporated into the presentation of the structures, in order to promote the importance of their owners.

## Commemorating the Deceased

In reality, how important were these owners? While the mausolea were designed on a scale that would celebrate the greatness of the deceased, their epitaphs, in contrast, tended to be brief. The most common format of epitaphs on mausolea is little different than that for funerary stelae and cippi: an invocation to the Di Manes, the name of the deceased, and the *vixit annos* formula that provided the age of the person at death. The deceased

64 *CIL* 8.1830.

might also be described by adjectives such as 'pious,' 'well deserving,' or 'dearest.'

While two of the attested early Roman mausoleum owners had apparently been immigrants, most of the names from the mid-Roman period reflect typical nomenclature for Roman Africa: the *nomen* Iulius accounts for approximately one-third of the family names, while variants on locally popular names such as Rogatus, Rufus, Secundus, and Saturninus, and names invoking good luck (such as Faustinus, Felix, and Fortunatus) dominate the *cognomina*.

When occupations or titles are provided,[65] they include those of army veterans who likely became landowners through retirement packages,[66] municipal leaders,[67] holders of the perpetual flaminate,[68] a priestess of the *Cereres*,[69] and even a businesswoman who operated her trade between Africa and Rome.[70] C. Iunius Faustinus Postumianus was an unusually distinguished member of this group, for he had been a provincial governor.[71] None of the owners of the nine or so mausolea at Sidi Aïsch recorded any profession or title; however, if they were master potters in charge of the ceramics industry of ancient Gemellae, as proposed by Cagnat and Ferchiou,[72] they belonged to a profession that is not attested through any funerary epigraphy from Roman Africa. Similarly, it was uncommon for those who derived their livelihood from the land to be commemorated as such in their epitaphs;[73] the 'Harvester of Makthar' is the most famous exception.[74] Despite the reticence of most mausoleum owners to state their professions, the careers and honours that are recorded demonstrate a wide variety of backgrounds and reveal that

65 Ferchiou (1995: 113–15) has studied the careers and social rank of several of these individuals.

66 *CIL* 8.217 (Mausoleum of the Petronii, Kasserine), *CIL* 8.11543 (Mausoleum of Q. Iulius Rufus and Q. Iunius, Haïdra), *CIL* 8.23296 (Mausoleum of Cn. Terentius Rufus Iguvinus, Thala); Guérin 1862 2, 105 (Henchir Mest). In addition, Iulius Probinus, a centurion who died in Gaul, received a mausoleum at Kesra (ancient Chusira) from his wife (*CIL* 8.702).

67 *CIL* 8.216 (Flavian Mausoleum, Kasserine), *CIL* 8.630=11827 (Mausoleum of C. Verrius Rogatus, Makthar), *CIL* 8.686 (duumvir Mausoleum, Maghrawa), *ILAfr* 111a (Mausoleum of Q. Cellius Secundus, Henchir Hamouda), *BAC* 1901: CLXVII (Mausoleum of [Pomponius] Tiprunitanus, Makthar).

68 *CIL* 8.211 (Flavian Mausoleum, Kasserine).

69 Picard 1946–49: 685 (Mausoleum of Nunia Primitiva, Makthar).

70 *CIL* 8.152 (Mausoleum of Urbanilla, Henchir Sommet el Amra).

71 *CIL* 8.11763 (Henchir Fortunat mausoleum at Gel'at es-Senan).

72 Cagnat 1885: 176 and Ferchiou 1995: 115.

73 Stone (1998) discusses some exceptions to this tendency.

74 *CIL* 8.11824; Raven 1984: 84–86.

an unusually large segment of this stratum of society subscribed to the mausoleum culture.

## Key Messages in the Epitaphs

While most mausoleum inscriptions are short and formulaic, some epitaphs are more verbose, such as those that commemorate the individual through poetry, as at the mausolea of the Flavii and the Petronii at Kasserine, the Mausoleum of Varius Frontinianus at Haïdra, and the Mausoleum of the Iulii at Makthar.[75] The monuments on which these honorific poems were inscribed were usually situated on properties near towns and presumably right next to the road. Like the visual pretense that these mausolea contained individuals of heroic status, these poems were designed to impress viewers: not only had the commissioner of the tomb paid for the impressive mausoleum, but he had also commissioned a poet to write a personal tribute and a lapicide to transfer it to stone. Yet it would have been unrealistic to think that that every passerby would stop to read the poem, especially in the case of long works. On the Flavian Mausoleum, for instance, over 165 lines were inscribed on the tomb, which is three storeys high; a person standing at ground level could not have read the entire inscription. The intention was for the viewer to recognize at a glance the extra effort that had gone into the tomb and the poetic tribute being paid to the deceased, and thereby to attibute yet greater glory to the tomb owner. If the individual's survivors commissioned the poem, they too then shared in the glory, a point to which I will return.

More prosaic funerary epitaphs supplemented the visual impact of the mausoleum by providing important information about its construction. In this regard, two types of information held clear significance for certain tomb owners and their families. Both expressed a concern for how peers would view the tomb owner; one, the timing of the construction, was apparently a preoccupation of many tomb owners of Africa Proconsularis, while the other, the cost of the construction, was recorded by a much smaller group of individuals.

The opportunity to witness one's own mausoleum built to completion was extremely important to many tomb owners in Africa Proconsularis; in fact, an epitaph from Carthage specifically instructs the reader to do so.[76] Subscribing to the same values, no less than half of the mausoleum owners specified in the inscriptions that their tombs had been built while

75 Cf. Pikhaus (1993) for *carmina epigraphica* in Africa.

76 Mausoleum of Antigona and Tabellarius, Carthage: 'quisque sapis, iuvenis, vivo tibi pone sepulchrum' (*CIL* 8.1027).

they were still alive (in the singular, *vivo* or *vivus*), for themselves and their survivors (*sibi posterisque suis* and variants).[77] Of all grave types, such phrases seem to be used only in conjunction with mausolea.

Two intentions can be inferred from such statements. The first is that the tomb owner would see the mausoleum completed according to his desires. He could then, while still alive, enjoy the glory that the monument was meant to cast on him after his death. Second, by taking care of the entire commission, the tomb owners ensured that their heirs would not be burdened with enormous costs or responsibilities. Poem A from the Flavian Mausoleum at Kasserine records that, while there was a superstition that those who built their own tombs were inviting an early death, a judicious person recognized the wisdom of ensuring a job done right and the desirability of protecting his heirs from the burden of having to erect the mausoleum after his death.[78] In one case, Q. Vibius Salaga claimed to have borne all the expenses for his tomb at Makthar (*conlatis omnibus impensis*), a statement presumably intended to emphasize that he was not leaving any related debts for his heirs.[79]

In addition, since the tomb owner constructed the tomb *sibi posterisque suis*, his survivors would be spared the cost of having to pay for their own funerary structure. Furthermore, he clearly intended his survivors to share in the prestige of his monument. In fact, Hitchner has suggested that the Flavian Mausoleum at Kasserine served in part to reinforce the status and dynastic pretensions of the deceased's family.[80] This motivation must have been common among mausoleum owners, to judge by the sentiments expressed in their epitaphs.

Such social pretensions are evident even in the terminology employed in some epitaphs. For instance, on his mausoleum at Makthar, Marcus Iulius Maximus three times styled himself as *conditor* ('founder' or 'builder') in reference, presumably, to the mausoleum he had commissioned for his family; at the same site, Licinius Maurus also called himself *conditor* in his mausoleum's epitaph.[81] In fact, the verb *condo* and its cognates appear in three types of inscriptions in Africa Proconsularis: first, in reference to the erection of an honorific statue;[82] second, commemorating the foundation or political elevation of a town, in most cases apply-

77 This calculation is based on 55 inscriptions that are either complete or have fragments that preserve phrases like *vivus* or *sibi suisque fecit*.

78 *CIL* 8.212, ll. 62–76.

79 *CIL* 8.23422. Is the implication that other peers of his were not so responsible?

80 Hitchner 1995: 496.

81 M. Iulius Maximus: *CIL* 8.645=11785, *CIL* 8.646=11786, *CIL* 8.653; Licinius Maurus: *CIL* 8.682.

82 E.g., *AE* 1957, 72.

ing the term *conditor* to the relevant emperor;[83] and, third, in funerary contexts, most often referring to the construction of a mortuary structure.[84] Given the company of the first two categories, the funerary context of the word carries greater weight than the more usual verbs *fecit* or *posuit* that are seen on funerary stelae. It emphasizes, first, that the construction of a mausoleum was a tremendous undertaking and, second, that the monument honoured the dead in a more public and prestigious way than the average grave. In this connection, the inscription on the Tetrastyle Mausoleum at Haïdra terms that tomb an 'honour' to the deceased.[85]

In the eventuality that the tomb owners could not build the tomb while they were still alive, they might leave provisions for the mausoleum in their will. This was apparently the case for mausolea such as those at Henchir Ali Ben Sultan, Henchir Brigita, Henchir Bou Ftis, and Chemtou, where epitaphs specifically mention that the person's heirs had built the mausoleum according to his will (*ex testamento*). The details of such wills may have resembled those of the Gallo-Roman 'Testament of Lingon,' which specified not only how the tomb was to be built and the manner of burial for the deceased, but also how cult was to be paid to him there.[86] In the testamentary examples from Africa Proconsularis, more emphasis may have been placed upon the construction than the cult, as the archaeological evidence seems to rank the concrete impact of a mausoleum over the ensuing rituals.

Whether the survivors were fulfilling the terms of a will or voluntarily paying for a mausoleum, they too stood to gain from the prominence of the monument; they therefore ensured that the epitaph credited them. In this context, there is sometimes more emphasis on the survivors than on the deceased. For instance, the husband of Urbanilla bemoaned his own sad future, avowing that life without her held nothing for him.[87] At Henchir Djouana, a couple who had lost their sons specifically stated that they, the parents, had built the monument; they then added a poem that lamented

83 E.g., *CIL* 8.1179, *CIL* 8.27568=*AE* 1898, 94; *AE* 1914, 179; *AE* 1951, 81; cf. *AE* 1968, 602.

84 E.g., *CIL* 8.341, *CIL* 8.684, *CIL* 8.15539=1523, p. 938; *AE* 1895, 30b; *AE* 1905, 34; *AE* 1932, 16; *AE* 1987, 1045. As *condo* has a secondary meaning of 'inter, bury,' mausoleum owners may have found the dual definitions of the verb appropriate for their monuments.

85 *ILTun* 427 = *CIL* 8.11520.

86 Woolf 1998: 166–68.

87 Mausoleum of Urbanilla, Henchir Sommet el Amra: 'nulla spes vivendi mihi sine coniugi tali' (*CIL* 8.152).

their misfortune at having lost 'two lights so bright.'[88] From a cynical viewpoint, such dramatic focus on the despair of the survivors served a social purpose, since it not only glorified the dead, but also emphasized the great investments (both emotional and financial) that the survivors had made.

Similarly, social aspirations were probably behind mention of the mausoleum's cost in certain inscriptions that have been found in Tunisia. In the region of Sbiba, Q. Aelius Saturninus recorded that he had paid for his tomb *non modicis sumptibus* ('at no small expense'), a boast that Ferchiou thought cast him in the unrefined company of the nouveau riche.[89] Indeed, his contemporaries may have found his boast vulgar, for his proclamation of expenditures is paralleled by only four other examples in Africa Proconsularis. In each case, those inscriptions provide specific costs: 16,000 *sestertii* for a mausoleum, *sportulae*, and banquet at Althiburos, 10,000 for a mausoleum at Chemtou, and 315 for the Mausoleum of M. Iulius Dativus at Carthage. Even some heirs proudly recorded their financial outlays, as at Henchir Bou Ftis for the Mausoleum of Octavia Rogata and Masupius Rogatianus, which cost 5000 *sestertii*. Unfortunately, these prices are difficult to compare, given that precise dates are not available for these inscriptions and that their mausolea do not survive; local economies will also have differed.

This handful of epigraphic references is atypical within the Tunisian corpus for blatantly referring to the cost of the tomb. While it was common to record the cost of an act of civic euergetism, such as the construction of an arch, the provision of public games, or the erection of an honorific statue, it was apparently not as acceptable to record the amount invested in constructing a mausoleum. Such a large-scale tomb was hardly subtle in its demonstration of wealth and did not need to emphasize the owner's riches further. There were other considerations within the relevant peer group that were of greater importance than mere *sestertii*.

In addition, while these costs were blatantly advertised in order to impress, they pale beside those of some mausolea that were built elsewhere in North Africa. Some inscriptions from Algeria declare expenses in line with the Tunisian examples,[90] but the Mausoleum of Ti. Cl. Firmus at Lambaesis cost 50,000 *sestertii*.[91] In the Tripolitanian *limes*, recorded costs are

88 Mausoleum of the Aurelii, Henchir Djouana: *CIL* 8.23243 and 23245 ('Aeheeu. Miseros nos et infelices, qui duo lumina tam clara perdidimus').

89 Ferchiou 1995: 115.

90 E.g., *CIL* 8.9109; *AE* 1969/70, 711 and 712.

91 *CIL* 8.2841.

two to three times higher than the Tunisian examples.[92] Again, the uncertainty of dates, the condition of the remains, and local economies preclude a close comparison of relative expenditures. Nevertheless, even in general appearance the average Roman mausoleum from Tunisia does not compare to that of the Libyan *limes*, as far as preserved examples are concerned. For instance, the Tunisian examples seem to have had less ornamentation than their Tripolitanian counterparts.[93] Imported materials and decorative stones are not generally attested, beyond the statue of the deceased; marble revetments, if used, have not survived. In certain cases, as previously pointed out, the exterior may have been decorated with stone or stucco reliefs, but usually such features were minor or non-existent. The average mausoleum of Africa Proconsularis was something to be viewed from a distance; instead of using elaborate decoration to entice the viewer closer, it relied upon a familiar architectural vocabulary to create an impression from afar.

## Concluding Thoughts

For the average owner of a mausoleum in Africa Proconsularis, the tomb's value did not lie in its accessibility, in the ability to list lifetime achievements,[94] or in the potential to record financial investment. From afar, the monument visually conveyed all that the tomb owner wanted to communicate. Few details needed to be seen in closer proximity, so most epitaphs were limited to a brief identification of the deceased and the statement that the tomb owner himself had taken responsibility for having the mausoleum built. In fact, a tomb owner who provided more details might unwittingly reveal that his lifetime achievements had not been so worthy of semi-divine status as his mausoleum might suggest.

What accounts for the emergence of this cohesive mausoleum culture in Africa Proconsularis in the second and third centuries C.E.? Bentivogli (2004) has recently suggested that many prominent mausolea of Roman Africa belonged to individuals who were actively pursuing 'Romanization' for themselves; they had Latinized names, many had performed military or political service for Rome (on at least a local basis), and they advertised their new elite Roman status through opulent mausolea. Yet several points caution against interpreting the growth of the mausoleum

92 Cf. Mattingly 1995: 152.

93 Mattingly (1995 and 1999) discusses the sculptural treatment of Tripolitanian mausolea.

94 The Mausoleum of the Flavii at Kasserine is in a select group in this regard.

culture in mid-imperial Africa as an index of those who wanted to appear 'Roman.' Three examples will suffice here. First, the *nomen* Iulius, which was so prominent among local mausoleum owners, went back to the Roman colonization of North Africa during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.;[95] far from being recent 'converts,' the Iulii who built mausolea in mid-imperial Africa may have had Roman nomenclature for generations, if not Romano-Italic ancestry. Second, while most of the mausoleum owners had the Roman *tria nomina*, others like Namphamo and Mathun were also comfortable members of this group. Third, the tomb owners who were cited by Bentivogli as pursuing Romanization had mainly commissioned tower-mausolea (i.e., tombs in the pre-Roman tradition), whereas one might expect that a person trying to emulate Roman ideals would instead have chosen a temple-mausoleum. Indeed, the surviving evidence suggests quite the opposite picture: the earliest known Roman-period mausolea in the area included those of two Roman immigrants who commissioned local-style tower-mausolea for themselves in the early first century C.E. They were fitting into the African tradition, rather than importing a Roman marker of status.

Another measure of so-called Romanization has been the 'epigraphic habit,' the growing tendency during the second and third centuries for individuals across the Roman Empire to commission inscriptions, particularly funerary epitaphs.[96] Various reasons have been put forward to explain why the popularity of such inscriptions rose so suddenly and so high. For instance, Meyer (1990) has proposed that the mid-Roman Empire witnessed two social developments that required advertising in an epigraphic medium; first, inhabitants of the Empire who had been awarded Roman citizenship felt a need to advertise their new status and, second, there was pressure on heirs to prove that they had fulfilled their testamentary obligations. Greg Woolf (1996) compellingly argued that inscriptions served to assuage common fears among Romans of instability and oblivion. According to Woolf, Romans were concerned about social mobility during their lifetimes (particularly downward turns in fortune), a common characteristic in particular of highly urbanized and militarized zones. They also worried that, after death, their memory would fade into obscurity. Inscriptions provided such people with a means of anchoring their achievements in stone, and of creating a lasting testament to their existence. As for the appearance of such concerns in the provinces, Woolf equated 'the spread of

95 Lassère 1977: 152 and 461.

96 The term 'epigraphic habit' was coined by MacMullen (1982).

an epigraphic culture in the Latin Empire' with 'the expansion of Roman society.'[97]

Scholars studying the 'epigraphic habit' have drawn heavily upon the corpus of inscriptions from Roman North Africa, a collection that is far larger than in most other parts of the Empire.[98] However, with the exception of a desire to be remembered, these explanations for the 'epigraphic habit' or 'epigraphic culture' do not seem to reflect the key priorities of mausoleum owners in Africa Proconsularis.[99] One aspect that has been lacking in these studies so far is an assessment from a pre-Roman perspective. Outside of the eastern Mediterranean, the Romans acquired few territories with cultures as literate as the Carthaginians' (whose culture was itself of eastern origin). Thousands of Punic inscriptions survive from North Africa, while indigenous groups were also making inscriptions, albeit in much smaller numbers, in the language that is conventionally called 'Libyan' or 'Libyco-Berber'; these inscriptions express many subject matters and types of information that also typify Latin epigraphy.[100] Yet the roots of an African 'epigraphic culture' were already in place long before the Romans had conquered Carthage or had even established their own emphasis on recording; so too, a pattern for elite individuals to erect tower-mausolea had already been established. Perhaps the most important difference between the pre-Roman period and the mid-Roman Empire was financial, rather than cultural or linguistic. The economic prosperity of the Antonine and Severan ages resulted in growing numbers of people who could afford commemorations and, in lesser numbers, large tombs. In Africa Proconsularis, they did not make such investments in the attempt to appear 'Roman,' to meet particularly Roman social or legal expectations, or to try to make permanent their new wealth or status; rather, they did so because local traditions had already dictated the behaviour that was expected of individuals who could afford such financial outlays. On the surface, the effect – an increase in inscriptions and monuments – might not seem to have differed from what was happening in other areas of

97 Woolf 1996: 34.

98 Volume 8, the North African volume of *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, alone contains over 28,000 inscriptions.

99 In fact, MacMullen's vaguely defined 'sense of audience' most closely explains in part the appearance and locations of Roman African mausolea (1982).

100 Most Punic inscriptions have been published in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* (Paris: 1881– ) Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. The major corpus of indigenous inscriptions is J.B. Chabot's *Receuil des inscriptions libyques*, published in 1940.

the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, global explanations for an empire-wide pattern may overlook the enduring heritage and particular aesthetics of individual regions.

## Appendix: References for Roman Mausolea Cited

These bibliographic references are not exhaustive, but refer the reader to the main source of information on each mausoleum; only those mausolea named in this article are included (Maus. = Mausoleum).

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Sidi Aïsch, Maus. of C. Iulius Rogatus: *CIL* 8.162.
– Maus. of Q. Iunius Quintianus: *CIL* 8.11256.
– Maus. of Q. Iunius Rogatus: *CIL* 8.165.
– Maus. of the Valerii: *CIL* 8.169=11250.
Sidi Aïssa: Saumagne 1934–35: 752–53.
Sidi el Hani: Saladin 1887: 28–29.
Thala, Maus. of Cn. Terentius Rufus Ignuvius: *CIL* 8.23296.

Thelepte and Bir Oum Ali, maus. between: *CIL* 8.11262.
Thuburnica, Maus. of Q. Annaeus Balbus: Ferchiou 1986.
Zanfour, Anonymous Maus.: Ferchiou 1987: esp. 784–821.
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# 5

# The Koine of the Cupula in Roman North Africa and the Transition from Cremation to Inhumation

*Lea M. Stirling*

A shared feature of cemeteries of the Roman period in North Africa was a type of tomb marker known epigraphically as a *cupula*.[1] The basic characteristic of the cupula is a long rounded top shaped like a half-barrel, sometimes placed on a low rectangular base, but there are marked regional variations in its shape, decoration, and method of building (fig. 5.1). Cupulae typically sat at ground level outdoors in cemeteries, though some at Hadrumetum were located within underground chamber tombs (*hypogea*).[2] Remains of the deceased were disposed of either within or below the marker. Cupulae appeared at both coastal and inland sites, with peak popularity in the second and third centuries C.E. The vast majority of cupulae are found in the North African provinces, though some appear in Spain, Italy, and Sicily (fig. 5.2). Previous discussions of this genre of tomb monument have mostly addressed its possible foreign or indigenous origins, concentrating on visual parallels. The present paper instead argues in favour of a functional approach to these markers. Given that cupulae appeared first in Roman times, it is evident that factors in this period must have contributed to their popularity. The heyday of the cupula in the second and third centuries coincides with the Mediterranean-wide gradual changeover in funerary practices from cremation to inhumation. Cupulae are found associated with both cremations in situ and inhumations. These changing mortuary practices offer a better context for discussing the rise

1 Research for this chapter was supported by the Canada Research Council Chair in Roman Archaeology.

2 Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 542; Lacomble and Hannezo 1889: 115, 119, 121–22, 129; and Leynaud 1910: 315.

Figure 5.1 Monolithic cupula at Ammaedara (photo J.P. Moore)

of the cupula than do visual comparison to monuments distant in time and space. Examining the function of cupulae sheds light not only on their 'origins' but also on their role in the funerary landscape of Roman North Africa.

This chapter commences with a survey of some basic characteristics of cupulae, examining regional variations, patterns of distribution, and chronology. It then considers their relationship to changing mortuary practices, as inhumation replaced cremation as the predominant method of disposal. Cemeteries at Carthage, Pupput, and Leptiminus will be particularly important as case studies in this discussion. The role of cupulae as bearers of inscriptions is also relevant. We will then examine the use of these markers within cemeteries by looking at their layout within enclosed areas or cemeteries generally and their relationship to other tombs. Through these lenses we will be able to evaluate how cupulae functioned in the mortuary landscapes of Roman North Africa.

## Defining the Cupula

First, let us consider the term cupula. It derives from *cupa*, or cask, and evidently refers to the round profile of the top of the marker. The term is

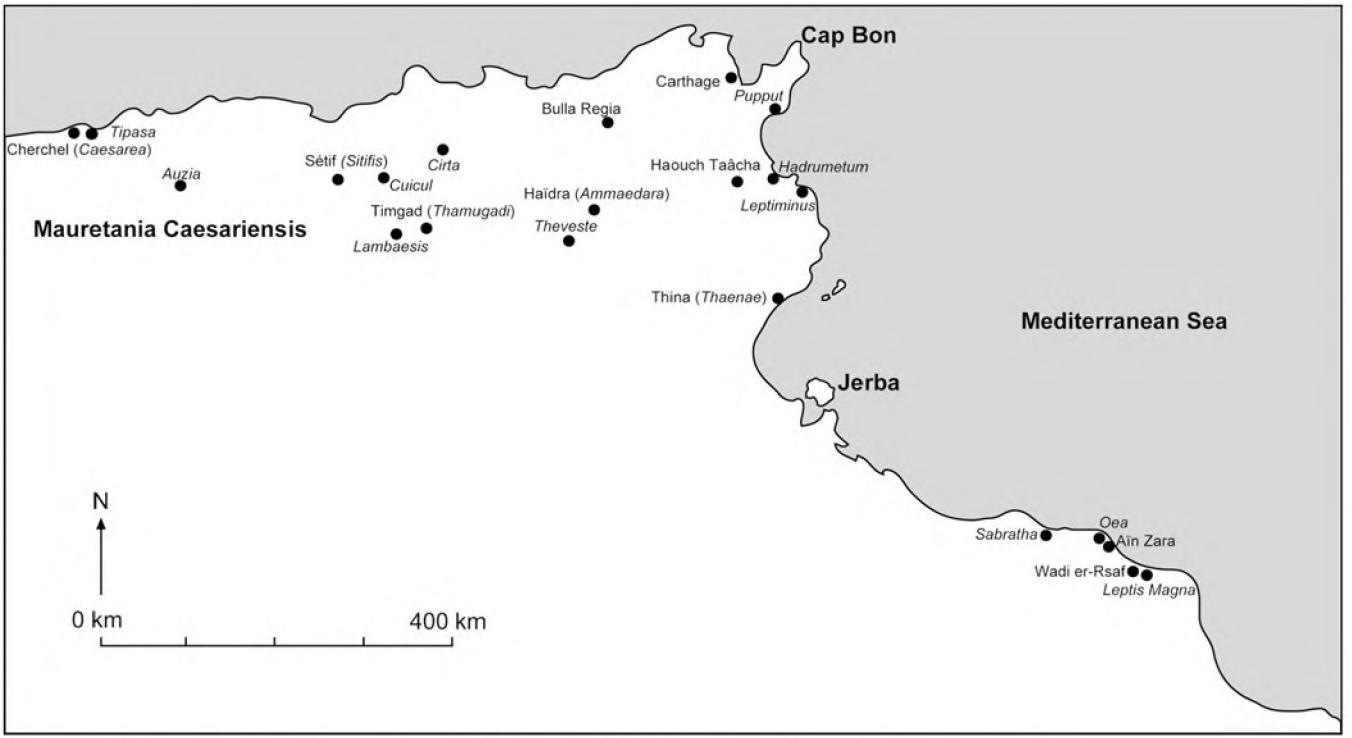


Figure 5.2 Map of North Africa showing principal sites discussed in the chapter (J. Gordon)

attested in thirty-one North African inscriptions, all on solid stone markers.[3] More speculatively, J. Schmidt (1888) further suggests that the formula *C P FEC*, conventionally read as *c(oniugi) p(io) fec(it)*, should be amended as *CVP FEC*, *cup(ulam) fec(it)*.[4] He points out that the ten examples of this formula appear in North Africa, the epicentre of the cupula. In one instance, the authors of the *CIL* specify that the inscription was found on a cupula, but they do not specify a monument type for the others.[5] The term cupa also appears twice on tombs of this shape in North Africa, and is attested elsewhere in the empire.[6] Occasionally, inscriptions using the term *tumulus* (mound) are found on cupulae, for instance at Tipasa and the fifth- to sixth-century cemetery at Aïn Zara in Libya.[7] These inscriptions are evidently evoking the visual similarities between a cupula and a mound of earth, as Lidiano Bacchielli[8] has pointed out. All but two inscriptions that use the term cupula appear in sites of Mauretania and Numidia. Only two inscriptions using that term are found in Africa Proconsularis, in the vicinity of Theveste, which is located well inland near the border with Numidia.[9] While intriguing, this pattern may simply reflect the overall higher rate of survival of inscriptions from cupulae in western regions (see below).

All the inscriptions specifying the term cupula are found on markers carved from stone (fig. 5.1). In appearance, monolithic cupulae are shaped like a chest, with straight sides and a curving top. Sometimes they are set onto a rectangular base, which may occasionally have a second step.[10] Typical measurements of monolithic cupulae are $0.55 \times 0.55 \times 1.05$ m, as for instance at a cemetery outside the Lambaesis gate at Timgad, but a few stone cupulae in this cemetery reached 1.60 m in length.[11] Stone cupulae usually carry inscriptions, normally on the short end, and their study has

3 In addition to the 25 entries in the index for *CIL* 8, see an inscription from Timgad: Leschi 1957: 206, no. 6; from Taksebt: Février 1964: 150; from El Kantara: Carcopino 1925: 52–53; from Tizgirt: Gsell 1910: cc, no. 2 (with epigraphic date of 300 C.E.); two from Cherchel: *AE* 1981: no. 00937, *AE* 1985: no. 00954. An abraded inscription from Cherchel may also read *cupu(la)*: Leveau 1971–74: 137, no. 11. The term cupula appears occasionally in Italy: *CIL* 6.2734, 13236.

4 Though Schmidt is cited frequently, I have not found any response to this proposal.

5 *CIL* 8.2475.

6 *CIL* 8.12593, 21886.

7 Bouchenaki 1975: 158; Aurigemma 1932: 177.

8 Bacchielli 1985: 306.

9 *CIL* 8.16601, 16732. One of the inscriptions (*CIL* 8.16601) uses the abbreviation *CO*, which Gsell suggests could stand for *copolam* rather than *coniunx*.

10 For instance, Leschi 1957: 205.

11 Leschi 1957.

Figure 5.3 Masonry tombs in the Site 200 cemetery at Leptiminus, Tunisia. Cupula in foreground, stepped tomb in background (photo Leptiminus Archaeological Project)

been principally epigraphic.[12] They are found in particular at inland sites such as Ammaedara (Haïdra), Theveste, or Timgad, where, it should be noted, there is good access to stone quarries. These stone tomb markers can confidently be identified as cupulae owing to the use of that term in their inscriptions.

Much larger tombs of the same shape, but built in mortar and rubble and differing in some details (see below), appear in Africa Proconsularis, Tripolitania, and some sites of Mauretania and Numidia (fig. 5.3). These curved tomb markers range in length up to 3.2 m and invariably have a stepped base comprising up to three steps.[13] When inscriptions are present on the masonry markers, they are usually located on the long side of the marker rather than on the short end, as is common on most monolithic

12 Location of inscription: Février 1964: 110.

13 Tomb measuring 3.2 m: Carton 1905: 410. For an illustrated typology with typical measurements, see Barrier and Benson 1908.

cupulae. While no masonry tomb has been discovered with an inscription using the term cupula, there is one with the term cupa at Carthage.[14] These masonry tombs too are usually described as cupulae by modern scholars, but given the paucity of epigraphic verification, the question arises as to whether that usage is justified. I argue that it is. At two sites at least, Bulla Regia and Tipasa, both types are found together. Though located within Africa Proconsularis, Bulla Regia lay well inland. Masonry and stone cupulae are found here in overlapping sizes. The monolithic markers at Bulla Regia range up to a maximum of 1.5 m on the long side, and the masonry tombs range from 1.5 m to 2.1 m on the long side.[15] At Tipasa a few monolithic markers are found alongside the more common masonry type. One monolithic cupula there even had a stuccoed surface giving it the appearance of a masonry tomb; excavator Serge Lancel argues from this tomb and other observations that monolithic tombs must postdate masonry ones.[16] Looking at material from a number of Mauretanian sites, Paul Février has made the same suggestion, albeit more tentatively.[17] Some masonry markers in very small dimensions exist in the shape of a cupula. The cemeteries of Thaenae and Hadrumetum had small chest-shaped masonry markers up to 0.6 m in length covering cinerary urns, alongside larger markers measuring up to 2.5 m, and Père Delattre records one small *caisson* measuring 1 m in length at Carthage.[18] As for the positioning of the inscription, masonry tombs occasionally do have inscriptions or decoration on the short end. Moreover, with the stone cupulae of Mauretania, there was a gradual elaboration of the end of the marker where the inscription was located. The end was carved to give the appearance of a stele protruding from the end, though the entire marker was in fact a single stone.[19] Curved masonry markers at Tipasa, Cherchel, Bulla Regia, and Hadrumetum had stone stele (usually triangular) affixed to their short end and thus had a similar appearance to some monolithic cupulae. At Bulla Regia, the decorative repertoire on the stelae and on cupulae was the same.[20]

14 *CIL* 8.12593. Delattre (1898) does not provide a detailed account of this tomb, but he describes other cupulae in these cemeteries as being of masonry construction. The altar tombs at these cemeteries were also all of masonry construction.

15 Carton 1890a: 205; Khanoussi 1983.

16 Lancel 1970: 179, 181.

17 Février 1964, 112.

18 Delattre 1889: 10; Feuille 1938–40: 647–48; Ordioni and Maillet 1904: 432.

19 Février 1964: 110.

20 Tipasa: Lancel 1970: 171; Bouchenaki 1975: 81–85; Cherchel: Leveau 1971–74: 146; Bulla Regia: Carton 1890b: 18, 20. Ordioni and Maillet (1903: 539, 542) mention a 'caillou émergeant' on one end of a masonry *caisson* at Hadrumetum. This puzzling description may refer to a stele like the ones at Tipasa or Sétif. Carton (1905: 410–12) found similar 'cailloux' at a cemetery at Henchir Zoura, near Hadrumetum, but does not illustrate

Thus, although the forms of curved tomb markers in these different media are not identical, the intent does seem to be the same. Differences in construction and size must reflect the availability of building materials. At coastal sites such as Hadrumetum or Thaenae, where good building stone is lacking, cupulae and stepped tombs are built from mortar and rubble.[21] Different construction materials made different sizes of tomb possible; this may explain why the mortared rubble tombs are usually larger than the stone ones. Other creative solutions could be used in building up the dimensions of tombs. Mortared rubble tombs at Sullechthum had amphoras laid lengthways inside the cupula to support the structure.[22] Pitched tiles appear within the cupula sometimes.[23] At Leptiminus, coarse limestone blocks formed the interior of some tombs, which were then coated with plaster. A modest stepped tomb was constructed from unmortared bricks.[24]

A number of types of decoration and elaboration appear on masonry cupulae. Libation holes, often with a ceramic container below, commonly appear.[25] These tubes usually lead directly to the compartment housing the remains. Masonry cupulae could have offering tables extending to the side.[26] With a dip in the middle, it appears that platforms received offerings, although Aïcha Ben Abed and Marc Griesheimer at Pupput point out that there were raised edges only on two sides and that liquid would run off the third edge.[27] At this site, the offering tables often had burned surfaces, and in some cases ashes were found around the sides. Thus, they may have been used in funerary dining or making burned offerings.[28] In some cases, the offering table was separate from the tomb, lined up axially

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them. He speculates that the stones inserted into the caissons were a miniaturized version of protohistoric megalithic monuments; this comparison suggests that the stones may have resembled the stelae used in Mauretania.

21 For an illustrated typology of cupulae at Thaenae, see Barrier and Benson 1908; also Feuille 1938–40 (without illustrations).

22 Hannezo 1890: 446.

23 Pupput: Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2004: 10; Leptiminus: Mattingly, Stirling, and Ben Lazreg 1992: 244–46.

24 Ben Lazreg, Mattingly, and Stirling 1992: 313, fig. 8; Stirling and Ben Lazreg 2001: 233, fig. 3.15.

25 Lancel 1970: 176; Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 547. On this topic generally, see Wolski and Berciu 1973.

26 These are often referred to as *mensae* in scholarly literature. Gsell 1901: 47; Ben Lazreg, Mattingly, and Stirling 1992: 315–16; Foucher 1964: 198; Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 581, 583, 585.

27 Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 585.

28 On food offerings at graves in North Africa, see Stirling 2004.

with the long end. At Hadrumetum, excavators noted that the offering table faced a libation opening at the base of the cupula.[29] At Tipasa, food remains including olive pits, pine nuts, and bones of horse and pig were found in front of tombs, at ancient ground level.[30] These may have fallen off the tables.

There are occasional records of painted decoration, stucco mouldings, or more simple finger designs on the sides of the markers. Flowers, garlands, vine decorations, vases, and still lives of fruit are variously recorded at Hadrumetum, Leptiminus, Thaenae, Tipasa, and Tangiers.[31] Excavators reported 'winged genies' – more probably cupids or seasons – cavorting in a field of flowers on the barrel of a cupula in the Hadrumetum cemetery, while further flowers in green, red, and blue appeared on the platform.[32] A cupula at Bir el Jebbana in Carthage displayed a reclining 'genie' with blue wings holding a headless cock.[33] Another at Bir es Zeitoun, also in Carthage, had 'winged genies' holding tripods on the short ends, and garlands and bouquets on the long sides.[34] Some cupulae showed figural scenes. Some at Thaenae showed scenes of hunting and people at a fountain.[35] One at Tangiers had a painting of a man holding a riding crop and flanked by horses at one end.[36] Certain cupulae at Timgad have decoration in relief showing the deceased reclining with a drinking vessel.[37] Stone cupulae at Bulla Regia had reliefs of a reclining figure raising a cup, fan, or mirror, and ones at Ammaedara also showed reclining figures.[38] More simple decoration also appeared. Carved garlands and rosettes adorned cupulae at Sétif, Auzia, Ammaedara, and Bulla Regia.[39] The sign of Tanit appeared

29 Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 547.

30 Lancel 1970: 166. To my knowledge, offerings have not been found in situ on offering tables, but that is unsurprising given that food would have decayed or been scavenged before processes of deposition covered over a cemetery.

31 Lacomble and Hannezo 1889: 129; Leynaud 1910: 315, 317, fig. 77; Mattingly, Stirling, and Ben Lazreg 1992: 238; Fortier and Malahar 1910: 86; Baradez 1961: 12, 15; Lancel 1970: 176; Michaud-Bellaire 1908: 419, 422. Feuille (1938–40: 647) refers to unspecified decoration in painting and stucco at Thaenae.

32 Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 539. For further genies at Hadrumetum, see Ordioni and Maillet 1904: 432.

33 Delattre 1889: 10.

34 Gauckler 1895: 88.

35 Fortier and Malahar 1910: 86–87, 92.

36 Michaud-Bellaire 1908: 422.

37 Leschi 1957: 206, no. 4; 208, no. 13.

38 Carton 1890b: 21; Saladin 1887: 177–78.

39 Sétif: Février 1964: 110; Auzia: *CIL* 8.20795; Haïdra: Saladin 1887: 177–78; Bulla Regia: Carton 1890b: 20.

on cupulae at Bulla Regia.[40] At Tipasa and Hadrumetum, red or black lines delineated the edges of the steps of some masonry cupulae.[41] Thus, floral decoration, 'winged genies,' offerings to the dead, scenes of the deceased (often dining), and more simple symbols predominate and evidently refer to aspects of funerary practice or hopes for the afterlife.

## Distribution, Chronology, and Patronage

Let us now consider the regional distribution of cupula tombs, both monolithic and masonry. Cupula and stepped tombs appear in greatest numbers in the provinces of Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, and Mauretania, and they are attested in certain coastal sites in Tripolitania.[42] J.-M. Lassère maps the spread of these tombs in North Africa, showing a concentration especially in the west and inland.[43] However, Lassère's interest in this publication was pagan funeral inscriptions, and his data principally concern inscribed examples. Two factors diminish the preservation of inscriptions along the eastern coast of Tunisia, the region known today as the Sahel. In antiquity, lack of good stone led to the use of rubble and mortar rather than ashlar masonry for buildings or tombs, and seems to have reduced epigraphic practices as well.[44] Nevertheless, engraved stone plaques are occasionally found mounted into tomb markers made of mortared rubble. Epitaphs could be painted onto tombs.[45] Second, in more recent times, when stone from ancient sites was burned for lime, inset inscriptions would have been easily detached and burned. One cemetery at Leptiminus, for instance, had three limekilns set right into it; very few finds of marble have been made at that cemetery.[46] Painted epitaphs too are vulnerable to environmental degradation. Thus, Lassère's map is skewed in favour of epigraphically rich sites, and survey of archaeological literature reveals

40 Carton 1890b: 21.

41 Bouchenaki 1975: 59; Lancel 1970: 176; and Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 549.

42 For Tripolitania: Musso 1997; Aurigemma 1932.

43 Lassère 1973: 122, 125.

44 In an introduction to a report on excavations in a cemetery of the 2nd–4th centuries at Sousse by Ordioni and Maillet, P. Gauckler (1904: 432) comments on the scarcity of inscriptions in this cemetery. He had earlier worked at Bir es Zeitoun in Carthage, where some 500 inscriptions were found: Gauckler 1895. No inscriptions have been found at Pupput, where some 1300 tombs were exposed in the late 1990s by a joint Tunisian and French team: Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 591–92.

45 For examples of inset inscriptions: Hannezo 1890: 447 = *CIL* 8.22893; Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 545 = *CIL* 8.22965; Leynaud 1910: 321; Cassaigne 1909: 343. For painted inscriptions: Aurigemma 1932.

46 Mattingly, Stirling, and Ben Lazreg 1992: 179.

frequent use of cupulae in the Sahel, with published examples stemming particularly from Pupput, Hadrumetum, Leptiminus, and Thaenae.[47]

Another version of the cupula is the stepped tomb, which has the same low rectangular base with additional flat platforms diminishing in size (fig. 5.3, background). An ancient name for the stepped tomb is not attested. Stepped tombs appear to be a regional phenomenon of the Sahel and are rare outside it.[48]

Variations of cupulae are also found in Rome, Ostia, South Italy, and certain coastal sites in Spain and Portugal.[49] The relationship of these monuments to the North African ones is not entirely clear. The term cupa is used fairly frequently on Spanish examples, and appears occasionally in Italy. The term cupula appears twice in Italy and is not used in Spain.[50] The monuments are approximately contemporary with the North African ones. While the non-African tombs do have a basically similar curved shape, the proportions and details of composition or decoration are not identical. The Spanish monolithic cupae, for instance, have more elaborate frames for the inscription than do comparable ones from Ammaedara. Delores Julia has pointed out the coastal location of the Spanish examples and used an onomastic argument to suggest that they belonged to individuals of African origin, probably people involved in trade.[51]

Epigraphy and archaeology combine to provide evidence for the date of use of the cupula tomb. A single Republican example is known at Cirta.[52] A cupula belonging to Tiberius Julius Justus, *filius Juliorum*, at Ammaedara appears on onomastic grounds to belong to the Julio-Claudian era.[53] Notwithstanding these examples, it is clear that the heyday of cupula tombs was the later second and third centuries, though it should be stressed that it is often difficult to date these tombs more specifically within that

47 Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001; Lacomble and Hannezo 1889; Ordioni and Maillet 1903, 1904; Leynaud 1910; Leptiminus 1 and 2; Barrier and Benson 1908; L'Espinasse-Langeac 1892. Naïdé Ferchiou (1995: 126) argues that scholars substantially underestimate the frequency of cupulae in the Sahel.

48 Stepped tombs: Icard 1904: 169; Ordioni and Maillet 1904; Ben Lazreg, Mattingly, and Stirling 1992: 312–15.

49 Bacchielli 1985; Julia 1965; Bonneville 1981; Fabre 1973; Berciu and Wolski 1970.

50 *CIL* 6.2734, 6.13236.

51 Julia 1965: 50–54.

52 *CIL* 5.7796; illustrated by Julia 1965: 17.2. Republican date: Lassère 1973: 136.

53 This cupula comes from a cemetery associated with the posting of the III Legio Augusta at Ammaedara from the time of Tiberius to that of Vespasian: Lassère 1973: 73–74. Two cupulae whose epitaphs do not include an invocation to the Manes may also be quite early, perhaps Flavian (77–78). Cupulae lacking *DMS* (*Dis Manibus Sacrum* [sacred to the infernal gods]) at Theveste may date to the 1st century C.E. (81).

broad time period.[54] A series of cupulae from western Mauretania Caesarensis provide a provincial year in the epitaph; these run from 169 to 300 C.E.[55] A securely datable cupula in Carthage is Severan; it belonged to a freedman of three Augusti (*AVGGG*), presumably Severus, Caracalla, and Geta during the period 198 to 211 C.E.[56] A tombstone at Theveste reporting that the deceased was captured by Capellianus provides another very specific date; the inscription must refer to events of 238 during the revolt of the Gordians.[57] Formulas such as *pius/pia* and *DMS*, which are used frequently on cupulae, have been shown to start in the first and second centuries C.E., respectively.[58] These epigraphic dates are confirmed in cases where datable artefacts sealed beneath cupulae are recorded.[59] Archaeologically, specific dating is hindered by the rarity of grave goods in many cemeteries in North Africa in Roman times.[60] Ceramic dates are broad, and coins offer only a *terminus post quem*. Generally, while excavators can arrive at a broad date for a cemetery or its phases overall, there is less

54 Bacchielli 1985; also Bonneville 1981; Lassère 1973. For an inscription naming a cupula and clearly datable to the period 198–211 C.E., see Lassère 1973: 45, discussing *CIL* 8.12593 and 24689.

55 Février 1964. The cupula dating to 169 is the earliest example of a dated epitaph on any kind of monument in the province (p. 108).

56 *CIL* 8.12593; Lassère 1973: 54.

57 *ILA* 1.3598; Lassère 1973: 92.

58 Lassère 1971; 1973: 123–28.

59 One cupula tomb at Tipasa apparently dates to the late 1st century as it contains a coin of Vespasian and is found with another 34 tombs that yielded no coins later than Domitian: Baradez 1961: 13. The rest of the datable material from Tipasa varied between the mid-2nd and the second half of the 3rd century: Bouchenaki 1975: 59, 81, 83–86, 90, 91, 94, 144–45. It included a coin of Hadrian (Lancel 1970: 179) and one of Marcus Aurelius (Lancel 1962–65: 65). Leveau (1971–74: 113, 115) cites coins of Faustina and Trajan under different cupulae at Cherchel. A coin of Trajan appeared under a cupula at Sétif: Guéry 1985: 143. At Leptiminus, cupula tombs sealed material variously of the second and third century: Mattingly, Stirling, and Ben Lazreg 1992: 247; Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 109–10, 126–27. Lamps of the 2nd century appeared under cupulae at Bulla Regia: Khanoussi 1983: 98–99. Cupulae at Pupput sealed pottery of the second half of the 2nd century and the late 2nd century: Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2004: 106–30. Some pottery dated to the early 3rd century was associated with the second phase of cupula construction (130–46). Unfortunately, the majority of reports from cemeteries, especially those written in the 19th century, do not provide a breakdown of finds from individual graves.

60 One report even comments specifically on the scarcity of grave goods with cupula tombs as opposed to other types: Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 548. By contrast, at Pupput, cremation graves (mostly under cupulae) consistently had more grave goods than did inhumations: Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 587. They also observe that children's graves typically had a greater number and variety of grave goods than did adult ones (572).

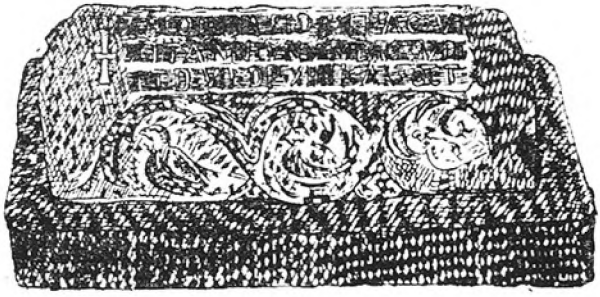

Figure 5.4 Tomb of Theodora, Bir el Jebbana cemetery, Carthage (from Delattre 1883: 108)

certainty about individual graves. Nevertheless, the predominance of these tombs in the second and third centuries is clear.

Cupulae dated definitively to the fourth century or later are rare, but do exist. The tomb of Navigius at Cirta is dated in the fourth century on epigraphic grounds.[61] An inscription from a cupula at Theveste contains military references that date it to the last quarter of the fourth century.[62] A cupula excavated at the Matarès cemetery at Tipasa had coins providing a *terminus post quem* of 341/345 C.E.[63] A very few cupulae have overtly Christian symbols on them. A child's cupula found at the edge of the Bir-el-Jebbana cemetery at Carthage had a bright mosaic surface showing a peacock, a chalice, and a cross flanked by doves (fig. 5.4).[64] Another cross appears beside the inscription, which names the deceased as Theodora. A masonry cupula at the cemetery of the basilica of Ste Salsa in Tipasa had a chi-rho on one of the rounded ends.[65] It was placed atop a stone sarcophagus. The cupula of Quoddeus at Lambaesis was decorated with a chi, which Nacéra Benseddik interprets as a Christian symbol.[66] She suggests a date in the late fifth or early sixth century for this tomb. A few 'chest-shaped' tomb markers in Leptis Magna have chi-rho decorations or Christian formulas such as *bona memoria*.[67] A cemetery of 121 masonry

61 Lassère 1973: 116 for Navigius at Cirta; see also p. 93.
62 *ILA* 1.3548; Lassère 1973: 93.
63 Bouchenaki 1975: 112.
64 Delattre 1883: 107–08; *CIL* 8.14219.
65 Février 1964: 111.
66 Benseddik 2001: 292–93, no. 13.
67 Reynolds and Ward-Perkins 1952, nos. 836, 838, 841, 846.

cupulae at Aïn Zara in Libya is dated to the later fifth or sixth century on the basis of formulae used in the unquestionably Christian inscriptions.[68] Notwithstanding these examples, it is clear that other forms of disposal, including sarcophagi and flat mosaic panels, prevailed in the fourth century and later.[69]

Who used cupulae and stepped tombs in North Africa? Excavations have found men, women, and children under these markers. Though not of the highest grade of monumentality, like mausolea, these tomb markers do represent a greater display than simple unmarked graves. Epigraphy provides occasional insight into occupations and social rank. Slaves appear at a number of sites. In some cases, the term *verna* indicates their domestic status, while a slave named Teucer in Tipasa is specified as a public slave, and a young girl named Zosa buried in Carthage was an imperial slave.[70] Inscriptions at Ammaedara include soldiers, veterans, freedmen, and slaves.[71] Cupulae naming soldierly ranks are found at Lambaesis.[72] At Sétif, cupula occupants included a *notarius* (a secretary, described as *ingeniosissimus*).[73] A priest of Pluto was buried under a cupula at Hadrumetum and a priestess is named at Bulla Regia.[74] Likewise, in South Italy and the Iberian peninsula, inscriptions mainly name slaves, freedmen, and their descendants.[75] A few isolated inscriptions indicate higher rank. An epitaph found near Sétif stands out in naming the occupant as a Roman knight who had held the offices of aedile and duumvir.[76] One inscription on a cupula from Sétif boasts of the deceased's liberal education and fluency in both Latin and Greek.[77] Another from Cuicul names the deceased as a member of the equestrian class and praises his expertise in all human literature and virtue.[78] A cupula at Ammaedara specifies that the curiales

68 Aïn Zara: Aurigemma 1932. A 10th-century Christian cemetery with specific dates in some of the inscriptions at en-Ngila near Tripoli falls outside the scope of the present study: Reynolds and Ward-Perkins 1952: 72, with further references.

69 In Février's study of epigraphically datable tomb markers, the latest cupula with a date was from the year 300. None of these cupulae had Christian formulas or symbols on it (1964: 111).

70 Verna: *CIL* 8.20603; Leynaud 1910: 321, no. 2. Public slave Teucer: Lancel 1970: 257. Imperial slave: *CIL* 8.13168.

71 Lassère 1973: 74, 92, 93.

72 Benseddik 2001, nos. 1, 8.

73 Février 1964: 139; *CIL* 8.8501.

74 Choppard and Hannezo 1893: 200 = *CIL* 8.22920; Carton 1890a: 177, no. 177.

75 Bacchielli 1985: 310.

76 Février 1964: 147.

77 *CIL* 8.8500; Février 1964: 141.

78 *CIL* 8.20162.

erected it *pro pietate*; the reference to curiales hints at a similar status for the deceased.[79] To summarize, then, cupulae generally belong to people below the wealthiest classes of society.

## Origins and Use of Cupulae

Thus far, then, we have surveyed evidence for the construction, decoration, date, geographical spread, and patronage of cupulae and stepped tombs. I would now like to consider their development and use within cemeteries. Speculation about the origins of this tomb type has often considered North Africa's Punic heritage and looked east. Thus, Henri Saladin, followed by Stéphane Gsell, looked to Phoenician roots for these markers. Writing in 1887, Saladin cited sarcophagi from Byblos and Jerusalem and contemporary mortuary practices in Damascus, and confidently predicted that Punic monuments resembling cupulae would soon be discovered in Tunisia.[80] More than a century later, these putative Punic comparanda in Tunisia have failed to appear. Moreover, there is a long gap in time between Near Eastern artefacts of the fifth century B.C.E. and the cupula tombs, which appear in the Roman period. Ion Berciu and Wanda Wolski (1970) have looked to other outside influences, pointing to graves in Hellenistic Alexandria as a prototype, but again these comparisons seem distant in time and space. Others have looked for indigenous prototypes for cupulae. Dr Carton likened certain features of cupulae at Hadrumetum to megalithic tomb markers.[81] Lassère compared cupulae to prehistoric stone tumuli in eastern Algeria, though confessed that 'une problème' was the round shape of these tumuli as opposed to the semi-cylindrical shape of the cupulae.[82] These visual antecedents are vague at best.

Much more convincing is Bacchielli's comparison of cupulae to the long, low mounds of earth over pit graves. He particularly cites Roman pit graves at Sétif that had a stele at one end.[83] Furthermore, one cupula at Tipasa carries an inscription referring to a tumulus.[84] This interpretation is appealing typologically, but does not account for the widespread use of cupulae.

79 *CIL* 8.23261/2.

80 Saladin 1887: 41–42, 221–22. Gsell (1901: 46–47) follows this opinion, as does Baradez (1961: 11).

81 Carton 1905: 411.

82 Lassère 1973: 123.

83 Bacchielli 1985: 307.

84 Ibid.: 309, citing Bouchenaki 1975: 157. The term tumulus also appears on the Christian cupulae at Aïn Zara in Libya: Aurigemma 1932.

It is apparent that visual comparisons alone do not provide a consistent or convincing explanation for the popularity of the cupula tomb in North Africa. An alternative approach for investigating the development of these tombs is to consider the timing, with their apex of popularity in the second and third century. As discussed above, cupula tombs are a phenomenon of the Roman imperial period, with a single attested Republican instance and widespread popularity arriving only in the second and third centuries C.E. Thus, we should seek factors relevant to this time period. One of the major events in mortuary practices in the Roman empire was the shift from cremation to inhumation. This shift occurred gradually in North Africa over the second to third centuries, more or less contemporary with the popularity, if not the actual advent, of cupula tombs.[85] Some difficulties arise in examining the relationship between cupulae and disposal practices, as even a brief survey of the archaeological data finds either frustrating vagaries or a seemingly haphazard blend of cremation and inhumation. Imprecise references to cremation and inhumation found side by side in most early sources on cemeteries often do not distinguish marker types or dates for individual tombs. Often the underlying tombs were not excavated or were excavated in such large numbers that data about specific tombs do not arise. For many of the sites favouring monolithic cupulae, the widespread reuse of tombstones as spolia and the scholarly preoccupation with epigraphy mean that we do not know what type of disposal was used.

Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that cupula tombs marked both cremations and inhumations, as a few regional observations will establish. At the inland sites of Numidia and Mauretania favouring stone cupulae, cremation seems to be recorded more frequently than inhumation with these markers. At Bulla Regia, monolithic cupulae usually covered cremation burials.[86] Both methods appear under cupulae at Timgad.[87] In the coastal sites of Mauretania, such as Tipasa and Cherchel, masonry cupulae nearly always went with cremations. Some further observations may be added. At Tipasa, where cupulae were mostly made from masonry, they usually covered bodies that had been cremated in situ, though a small number of cupulae covered inhumations.[88] In the Sahel, where masonry markers predominate, cupulae appear with both types of disposal. The most detailed publication from this region comes from Pupput, where the majority of

85 Février 1992.
86 Carton 1890a; Carton 1890b; Khanoussi 1983.
87 Leschi 1957: 205.
88 Bouchenaki 1975: 93.

cupulae covered cremations in situ.[89] At Leptiminus, cupula markers predominantly covered inhumations at a coastal cemetery (Site 10) and one part of the east cemetery (Site 200).[90] In another part of the east cemetery, cupulae mostly covered cremations in situ (Site 304). Publications on the extensive, much excavated cemeteries of Hadrumetum are broad in scope, but in the occasional cases where the type of disposal with cupulae is specified, it is usually cremation.[91] Further east in Tripolitania, masonry cupulae in Leptis Magna covered inhumations.[92]

Now let us further examine these markers in the light of changing mortuary practices, not so much to pinpoint their origins as to explain their remarkable popularity. There are at least two possible complementary explanations for a connection between cupulae and disposal practices, both tied to the longer shape of the cupula compared to earlier forms of marker such as *cippi* (squared, altar-like monuments that displayed inscriptions). In their solidity and display of an inscription, cupulae somewhat bring to mind cippi in a longer, lower, curved format. This longer shape would have served better to mark the length of a corpse that was either cremated in situ or buried. We will first examine associations between cupulae and cremations in situ, then consider associations between cupulae and inhumation. Investigation of certain better-documented cemeteries will elucidate these relationships.

## Cupulae and Cremation In Situ

Some cupulae cover burned remains that had been cremated in situ, then covered with a shelter of amphora walls or pitched tiles, as seen at Cherchel, Pupput, and Lepiminus.[93] The cupula was then built over the structure containing the remains. The elongated shape of the cupula is therefore a necessary adaptation of the squarer altar-shaped monuments because of the length of the corpse. One inscription from Cherchel specifies that the cupula covers a pyre: *cupulam superstitem rogo*.[94]

89 At least, this is so in the southern section of the cemetery that has been published in detail: Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2004. Some cupulae did cover inhumations: Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 572.

90 Site 10: Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 154.

91 Lacomble and Hannezo 1889; Ordioni and Maillet 1903 and 1904; Choppard and Hannezo 1893; Icard 1904. See also reports from Thaenae: Barrier and Benson 1908; Feuille 1938–40.

92 Musso 1997.

93 Examples exist at Thaenae as well: Barrier and Benson 1908: 47. Note that cupulae also occasionally contain cinerary urns: Feuille 1938–40: 642 (Thaenae); Foucher 1964: 198.

94 *CIL* 8.9392.

A vast cemetery recently excavated at Pupput provides important and well-documented evidence for these questions. Many cupulae here covered cremations done in situ. The extent of the structure closely matched the size of the pit used for the cremation. In the section of the cemetery that has been published in detail, cremations in situ account for the vast majority of cupulae; it is not wholly clear if this pattern holds for the overall cemetery, where some 400 graves were excavated (of approximately 1300 graves exposed). Excavators argue that the cremations in situ predated cremations redeposited in urns.[95] This change in practice may have been caused by the crowding of the cemetery. There are also some inhumations covered by cupulae at this cemetery. Crowding was clearly a factor in the placement and marking of these graves as well.

In contrast to the situation at Pupput, Février has speculated that cremation in situ may have been an intermediate phase between cremation and inhumation at Sétif.[96] We potentially see the same sequence at the Site 10 cemetery at Leptiminus. One of the earliest graves in the cemetery is a large cupula (2.7 m on its long end). Built right into the superstructure of the cupula was a chamber covered by pitched tiles. Although the tomb was robbed at a later date, a layer of ash and the absence of any further disposal below the tomb establishes that it was a cremation burial, presumably done in situ, given the elongated form and absence of an urn.[97] A sherd of the first or second century built into the masonry suggests an early date for the tomb. Another cremation in situ was found buried under a mass of cobbles (perhaps a bedding for a more solid masonry marker) just east of the first cupula cremation.[98] A lamp in this tomb dates to the late second or early third century, indicating that cremation remained in use even after inhumation had become well established. Other datable tombs (including two other cupulae) excavated in this cemetery covered inhumations and belonged to the later second and third centuries.[99]

95 Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 567.

96 Février 1992: 186–87; Février and Guéry 1980: 123.

97 Mattingly, Stirling, and Ben Lazreg 1992: 244–46; Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 126–27.

98 Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 114–16. A 2nd- or 3rd-century urn containing a cremation was found next to a cupula at Site 8, which is located about 50 m south-west of the mausoleum at Site 10 and presumably exposes parts of the same cemetery: Mattingly 1992: 257.

99 A redeposited cremation was found inside a cupula at Site 302. Traces of a wooden box for the bones were observed. This tomb presumably belonged to the same necropolis as Site 200, which was very close by (Longfellow in Stirling, Stone, and Ben Lazreg et al. 2000: 214–16).

Because of their long format, then, cupulae provided highly suitable covers for cremations done in situ.[100] The available evidence does not provide a consistent chronological relationship between primary and secondary cremation. Rather, this varies by site.

## Bir el Jebbana, Bir es Zeitoun, and Hybrid Markers

The long format of cupulae also made them eminently suitable to protect the outstretched bodies in inhumation graves, and their floruit in the second and third centuries does coincide with the widespread if gradual shift from cremation to inhumation. Two cemeteries at Carthage shed light on this potential relationship.

A cemetery of imperial slaves and freedmen in Carthage at Bir el Jebbana and two at nearby Bir es Zeitoun are individually and collectively identified as the 'Cemetery of the *officiales*' by their excavators and subsequent scholars. An interesting window on a time of transition stems from these sites, which were excavated by Delattre in 1888 and 1895–96, respectively.[101] These cemeteries each yielded more than 500 inscriptions and fragments. We will discuss them together because they overlap in date, clientele, and tomb types. At Bir es Zeitoun, monuments spanning three centuries were built up in two main layers within fill reaching depths of 6 to 7 m. Delattre and subsequent scholars refer to these as 'les cimetières superposés.' The cemetery was not walled. Delattre observed change and development in the types of monuments used, and the abundant epigraphic harvest from the site has contributed significantly to knowledge of the evolution of formulae used in epitaphs. The majority of markers in the earliest cemetery were stelae, while cippi predominated in the upper cemetery, as at neighbouring Bir el Jebbana. Among the late graves at Bir es Zeitoun there was at least one cupula tomb, which covered a cremation in an urn.[102]

Enclosed by a wall, the cemetery at Bir el Jebbana covered an area of ca. 1000 $m^2$. The vast majority of the funerary monuments here were cippi. Most held urns with burned remains within their structure. Clay

100 Cupulae also occasionally contain cinerary urns: Feuille 1938–40: 642 (Thaenae); Foucher 1964: 198.

101 Both sites were mined extensively for their inscriptions before Delattre's actual excavations. Thus, a large proportion of the published inscriptions were found outside his excavations. Delattre's extensive and fragmented bibliography on these sites and their inscriptions is assembled by Lassère (1973: 25 n. 3). Lassère's synthesis of the site (25–57) is also important. The most significant original publications for the present discussion are Delattre 1889; Delattre 1898; and Gauckler 1895.

102 Gauckler 1895: 88.

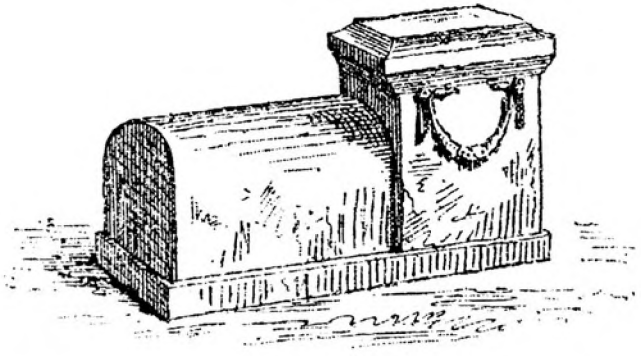

Figure 5.5 Hybrid tomb marker combining elements of a cupula and a cippus from the cemetery at Bir es Zeitoun, Carthage, Tunisia (from Gauckler 1895: 88, fig. 3)

tubes allowed the urns to receive libations. Delattre's publications are a rich source for information concerning the decoration, structure, and grave goods of these tombs, albeit in a sweeping, unspecific fashion. Though the vast majority of tombs at this cemetery were cippi, Delattre mentions that there were a few cupulae, and records one inscription of the 12-year-old slave Zosa specifically as being from a cupula.[103]

Despite the ample epigraphic evidence, the chronological relationship of the two cemeteries is ambiguous. With anepigraphic stelae and coins dating to Augustus and Tiberius, and 52 inscriptions datable to the first century C.E., the lower cemetery at Bir es Zeitoun appears to have started before the cemetery at Bir el Jebbana, where only 13 inscriptions are datable to the first century, and there is no material securely datable to the early first century. There are no cupulae in the lower cemetery. The later cemetery at Bir es Zeitoun and the one at Bir el Jebbana are contemporary, with about equal quantities of inscriptions datable to the second and third centuries. Curiously, though, there is no overlap in the maker's names on lamps from the two sites, even in the two roughly contemporary phases.[104]

At both cemeteries a small minority of graves at the cemeteries were inhumations; thus, these cemeteries appear to reflect a growing interest in inhumation towards the end of their lifespan. A few cupulae existed alongside the much more numerous cippi. Paul Gauckler describes and illustrates a hybrid monument consisting of an altar with a semi-cylindrical extension (i.e., a cupula) to one side at Bir es Zeitoun (fig. 5.5).[105] Gauckler's

103 *CIL* 8.13168.

104 These observations and figures are drawn from Lassère 1973: 53–54.

105 Gauckler 1895: 88–89.

example covered a cremation urn. Among the grave goods was a coin of Domitian. Other hybrid monuments at the site, described as long hemicyclical markers surmounted by a squared cippus, covered inhumations.[106] These hybrid monuments seem to show a transitional experiment with a new style of marker. The elongated cupula format provided the length needed for demarcating the surface area above the length of an extended corpse to prevent future grave-diggers from disturbing it. In the case of hybrid monuments covering cremations, the patrons may have found a new marker style attractive even if they did not want to change their method of disposal. The coin of Domitian regrettably only provides a terminus post quem for this interesting transitional monument. This cemetery did contain at least one cupula, which went with a cremation. At Bir el Jebbana, the cemetery that starts later, hybrid markers are not recorded, but there are cupulae over inhumations.[107] Perhaps at Bir el Jebbana we see a further stage in the growing popularity of inhumation and of the cupula.

Under this model, then, the popularity of the cupula increased in correspondence with the growing prevalence of inhumation. Supporting this interpretation is the fact that cupulae appear in other cemeteries with a mixture of contemporary cremation and inhumation burials, as for instance in Sousse and the western cemetery at Cherchel.[108] At a cemetery outside the Lambaesis gate at Timgad, names on inscriptions showed that tombs were laid out in family groupings. Within a single family, however, members used different types of marker and disposal.[109] This diversity of usages within the same family illustrates how gradual and indirect the transition between methods of disposal was.

## Cupulae and Inscriptions

The changeover from inhumation to cremation and the floruit of the cupula in the second and third centuries also coincides with a pinnacle in the popularity of inscriptions. Certainly, cemeteries functioned as a landscape of

106 Delattre 1898: 218. A similar hybrid tomb marker with painted decoration on the sides showing flowers is located in the enclosure of the archaeological museum at Utica. It is apparently unpublished, though Bouchenaki (1975: 149) makes reference to it. The cemetery at Thaenae had cupulae with an altar protruding from one end: Barrier and Benson 1908, pls. 6, 7; Fortier and Malahar 1910: 86. Carton (1908: 435) reports a marker 'de forme presque cubique, intermédiare entre le caisson et le cippe' at Bulla Regia. There is no dating evidence for these tombs, nor is the type of disposal beneath them recorded.

107 Delattre 1889: 10.

108 Cherchel: Leveau 1971–74; Sousse: Icard 1904; Foucher 1964: 195–99. For other examples, see Foucher 1967.

109 Leschi 1957.

epigraphy, and cupulae offered broad, billboard-like surfaces to display inscriptions. In North Africa, the popularity of the 'epigraphic habit' has been linked to the proclamation of newly acquired citizenship status, with its accompanying testamentary privileges and obligations of commemoration for heirs.[110] Though the importance of setting up epitaphs may well have been a factor in the popularity of the cupula, the relationship between these is difficult to pin down. The funerary monuments that preceded cupulae in North Africa, stelae and cippi, offered adequate surfaces for epitaphs, and many indeed were inscribed. At the cemetery of the officiales in Carthage, for instance, where the vast majority of tombs were cippi, some 700 inscriptions were found.[111] Moreover, since most of the monolithic cupulae forgo the broad expanse of the side of the barrel in favour of placing the inscription on the short end of the cupula, the changeover to the cupula format cannot fully be explained as a way to acquire a larger canvas for epigraphy. In addition, poor preservation of inscriptions notwithstanding, it is clear that many masonry cupulae did not carry inscriptions in the first place.[112] Thus, while an association between the popularity of the cupula and the increase of epigraphy is enticing, it is not fully demonstrable on the available evidence.

## Cupulae in the Mortuary Landscape

Better understanding of the functional significance of cupulae leads to an evaluation of their function in the funerary landscape of Roman North Africa, to which question we now turn. Excavation photos of large cemeteries at Tipasa and Pupput provide a sense of the crowding and variety in a Roman cemetery, with the vaulting of the cupulae providing some visual unity.[113] In many cemeteries, for instance at Leptiminus, Pupput, or Cherchel, cupulae and stepped tombs appear in conjunction with mausolea and walled enclosures known as *areae* (fig. 5.6). Mausolea, often with walled enclosures around them, dominated the layout of the tombs around them. Thus, at a cemetery at Leptiminus (Site 10), an enclosure surrounded mausoleum 20.[114] Other burials clustered around the walls of

110 Meyer 1990.

111 Lassère 1973: 25.

112 No inscriptions at all have been found at the vast cemetery of Pupput, though Serge Lancel suggests that later disturbance may account for this (comments recorded in Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 591).

113 See also Sullechthum, as illustrated in Ben Lazreg, Mattingly, and Stirling 1992: 313.

114 Mattingly, Pollard, and Ben Lazreg 2001: 135, fig. 2.42; 154–57. For mausolea in a cemetery of cupulae, see also Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2001: 572–83.

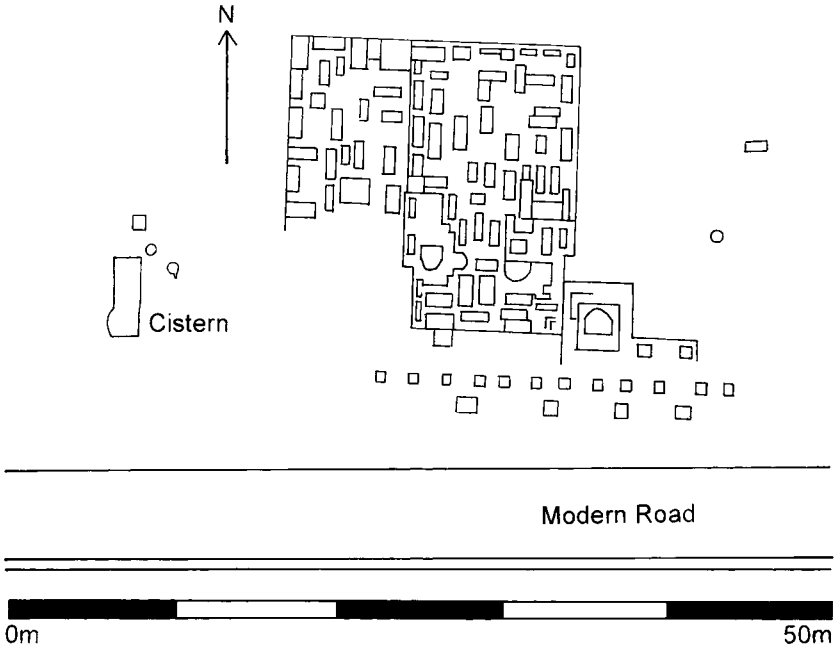


Figure 5.6 Cupula tombs within enclosures at the Hadrumetum cemetery. The row of square cuttings lining the road probably held trees (J. Heinrichs, after Lacomble and Hannezo 1889, plate 1).

the enclosure, both inside and out. Some of these satellite burials were fairly humble, and had no preserved marker, but three retained traces of a masonry foundation, probably for a cupula or stepped marker. These secondary tombs may belong to dependants of those buried in the mausolea, such as slaves, freedmen, or clients. The alignment of these tombs varies noticeably from that of tombs elsewhere in the cemetery. In the south-east sector of this cemetery, alignment appears to follow piers from an aqueduct, while in the north-east it may reflect an ancient road. Thus, the group of tombs associated with mausoleum 20 forms a distinct group within the cemetery. A mausoleum, parts of an enceinte wall, and several cupulae were excavated at another cemetery at Leptiminus (Site 200).[115] While the enceinte wall was not completely uncovered, it appears to encircle a cluster of cupula tombs in rows rather than the adjacent mausoleum. Cupulae

115 For a plan and brief discussion of this largely unpublished cemetery, see Ben Lazreg 2001; Stirling, Welle, and Mattingly 2001.

and other tombs surround the mausoleum and even attach to its sides. In this instance, the area containing the cupulae may represent a family plot rather than a hierarchical grouping. In the cemetery at Hadrumetum, mausolea, tombs in *areae*, and individual tomb markers all follow the alignment of the ancient road (fig. 5.6). Even so, the added height or decoration of mausolea emphasized relative importance. In one mausoleum, a statue in a second storey niche surveyed a small cupula attached to its base; a second cupula flanked the back of the mausoleum.[116] Three walls of an enclosure around this mausoleum and several other cupulae were excavated. At Leptis Magna, cupulae appeared in an enclosure around the entrance to a hypogeum.[117]

The relative size of cupulae and their orientation in some cases around monuments of the more wealthy projected the social order into the landscape in a way that was both visible and legible to passers-by. This mirror of the social order appears both at crowded urban cemeteries and at smaller rural ones, such as Henchir Zoura (near Sousse) or Haouch Taâcha (near Kairouan), which must have served agrarian communities, farms or villas.[118] Saladin's sketch of Haouch Taâcha vividly evokes this mortuary landscape (fig. 5.7).

With their stepped bases, these markers mirror the stepped profile seen on some mausolea. In some cases the upper vaulting bore a resemblance as well. Mausolea at Pupput are reconstructed with barrel-vaulted roofs.[119] Here the curvature of the cupulae would mirror nicely the vaulting of the mausolea. At a cemetery near Hadrumetum, an enclosure contained cupulae and a barrel-vaulted *columbarium*.[120] The same confluence of vaulted columbaria with cupulae enclosing single cremations appears further south at Thaenae.[121] Again, gradations among similarly designed tomb types imprinted the values of a hierarchical society on the landscape.[122]

116 Ordioni and Maillet 1903: 537–41; critiqued and modified by Carton 1905: 410–11. Carton points out that one foot and the base of the statue remained in situ.

117 Musso 1997.

118 Henchir Zoura: Carton 1905: 411; Haouch Taâcha: Saladin 1887: 39–43.

119 Ben Abed and Griesheimer 2004: 8, fig. 3. One mausoleum was constructed atop two cupulae. Although their barrels were destroyed, the pitched tile structures below the barrels were deliberately left protruding through the floor: Ben Abed and Griescheimer 2001: 576–81.

120 Carton 1907: 169–71.

121 Barrier and Benson 1908; Feuille 1938–40. Other sites where cupulae resemble mausolea include Bulla Regia (Carton 1890b: 17) and Haouch Taâcha (Saladin 1887: 39–43).

122 Ferchiou (1995: 126) has even suggested that cupulae were virtually a type of mausoleum because they are so large, though this suggestion seems hyperbolic given the difference in size between cupulae and mausolea. Likewise impressed at the dimensions

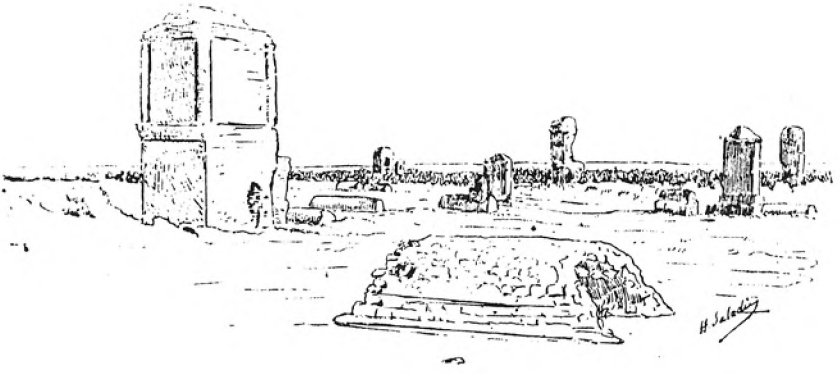

Figure 5.7 Cupulae and mausolea at Haouch Taâcha, Tunisia (from Saladin 1887: 39, fig. 51)

Cupulae also appear in cemeteries lacking mausolea and *areae* to provide overt organization. Still, there may be family groupings. The cemetery at Bir el Jebbana in Carthage, which contained a few cupulae, did not have internal divisions within its overall enceinte wall, but nevertheless was apparently organized in groupings of families and professions.[123] Delattre's plan shows that the tombs were generally oriented to the same cardinal points, though the layout was otherwise fairly haphazard. This cemetery is also arguably organized in more general sense by the fact that it housed principally imperial slaves and freedmen, with an occasional legionary veteran. As discussed above, excavators report family groups at a cemetery outside the Lambaesis gate at Timgad. The cemetery was walled, but there does not appear to have been internal walls. Likewise, at Bir el Jebbana inscriptions made it possible to identify family groupings.

The frequent floral and vegetal decoration on cupulae suggests another function for them within the landscape. Such decoration must have evoked funeral gardens, perhaps echoing real plants and flowers during the wet seasons, and providing colour and a reminder of lusher times in a dry summer landscape.[124] Bacchielli sees the vegetal decoration as evidence that cupulae originated as monumentalized versions of earth mounds (tumuli).[125]

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of cupulae, Carton (1890a: 204) proposed that mausolea imitated cupulae, not vice versa.

123 Lavigerie 1884: 218. For plan, see Delattre 1889: 6.

124 As suggested by Lancel 1970: 178.

125 Bacchielli 1985: 309, 319 n. 65.

In the cemetery at Hadrumetum, trees evidently lined the ancient road passing through the cemetery (fig. 5.6). Pits measuring 1×1 m and filled with rich soil have convincingly been interpreted as cuttings for trees.[126] The shade and greenery of these trees would have complemented the real and painted vegetation of the tombs. Louis Foucher refers to channels at the 'neopunic' cemetery and interprets them as a garden.[127] Some cupulae decorated with flowers were erected inside hypogea at Hadrumetum.[128] Apparently the image of the funeral garden was strong enough even to transfer underground.

Infinitely adaptable, well structured for the display of inscriptions, and suited to any building material available, cupulae were the predominant funerary marker of the high Roman empire in Mauretania, Numidia, and Africa Proconsularis. The rise and acme of these monuments in the later second and third centuries broadly corresponds to the change in mortuary practice from cremation to inhumation. With their elongated shape, cupulae were suited to covering bodies laid out either for cremation in situ or for burial. This functional explanation of their development and popularity avoids the pitfalls of simply seeking visual parallels, whether foreign or indigenous.

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126 Lacomble and Hannezo 1889: 112, 119. Goetschy (1903: 157) describes similar cuttings.

127 Foucher 1964: 195.

128 Leynaud 1910: 315–17.

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# 6

# The African Way of Death: Burial Rituals beyond the Roman Empire

*David J. Mattingly*

## Introduction: The Garamantes of Fazzan

Most work on Roman-period cemeteries in Africa has focused on points of comparison between them (and their associated funerary rituals) and those of Mediterranean civilizations (Greek, Phoenician, Roman). Building on the important foundations laid long ago by Gabriel Camps,[1] this chapter aims to take a different perspective and to try to identify specifically African characteristics in mortuary tradition by focusing on one of the most significant of Saharan peoples of the Classical period.

The Garamantes of the Libyan Sahara featured in Greco-Roman sources as the epitome of ungovernable barbaric nomads from the desert wastes. However, archaeological evidence reveals a basic fallacy of this Mediterrano-centric view.[2] The Garamantes constituted an independent kingdom

This chapter summarizes the evidence for Garamantian funerary traditions, presented in full detail in Mattingly et al. 2003. The work was carried out while I held a Research Readership of the British Academy and was directing a project on the Garamantes with major funding from the Leverhulme Trust and the Society for Libyan Studies. Final drawings are the work of Mike Hawkes and several of the photographs were taken by Toby Savage. I am grateful to David Stone and Lea Stirling for their invitation to participate in the AIA session in January 2001 that led to this publication and to them and fellow colloquium participants, notably Bruce Hitchner, for their helpful comments on the original paper. My Leicester colleague David Edwards made important contributions to the research that underlies this paper. Responsibility for the final presentation here is mine.

1 Camps 1961.

2 For general syntheses on the Garamantes, see Mattingly 2000a, 2000b; Mattingly et al. 2003.

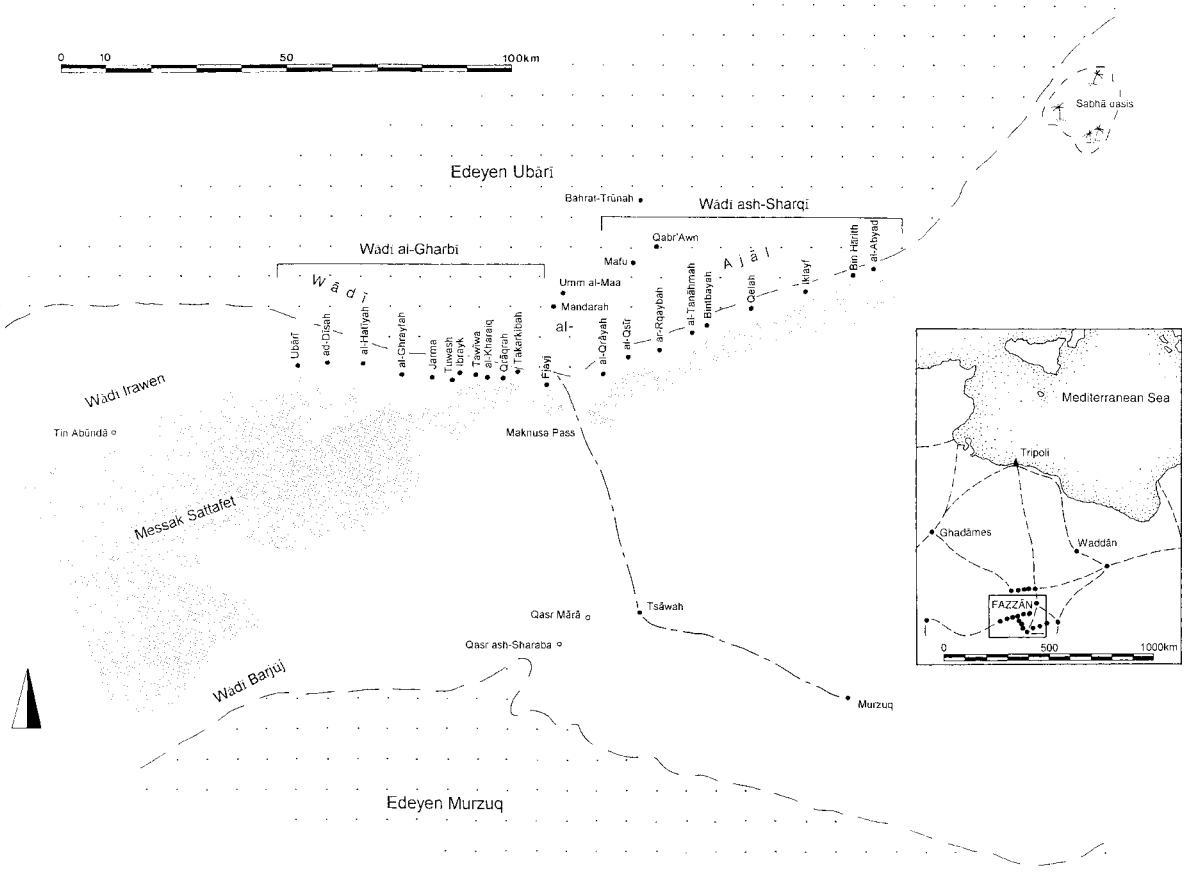


Figure 6.1 Map showing principal oases in the Wadi al-Ajal and (inset) location of Garamantian heartlands in Fazzan (southern Libya)

beyond the southern frontier of the Roman empire (their capital lies 1000 kilometres from the Mediterranean coastal city of Tripoli). They were skilled oasis cultivators, living in well-planned towns and villages, and with a highly evolved social hierarchy and material culture. There capital was an urban centre known as Garama (modern Jarma) in the Wadi al-Ajal (fig. 6.1). This chapter will discuss their mortuary traditions and the extent to which these offer insights into specifically African traits. The remains of over 100,000 tombs are known in the Garamantian heartlands, ranging from simple cairns of stone to sophisticated elite monuments such as mausolea inspired by Greco-Roman models or pyramidical forms. The work of C.M. Daniels on the Garamantes in the 1960s and 1970s[3] is now supplemented and brought to final publication by the Fazzan Project (1997–2001), which has focused on the Garamantian heartlands of the Wadi al-Ajal in Fazzan, south-western Libya.[4] From this we can see that the architecture of the tombs and their placement within the landscape had cultural significance.

The mixture of African traditions with elements of Egyptian and Greco-Roman practices is particularly interesting in this central Saharan location outside the Roman empire. The evidence can inform discussion of funerary practice in Roman Africa by allowing us to identify African elements of the provincial funerary tradition. However, we also need to recognize that the Garamantian heartlands of Fazzan stand out from many other areas of the ancient Sahara. Because this was a zone of contact with north and north-east Africa, what we find in Fazzan is not necessarily a model for 'African' funerary ritual in general. Rather, we see an amplification of some traditional customs in the context of the incorporation of external influences, practices, and material culture.

The earliest burials of neolithic date (8000–3000 B.P.) in this part of the Sahara appear to have been made in natural rock crevices, sometimes in rock shelters, with the body wrapped in animal hides or basketry.[5] By the later millennia B.C.E., burials were placed below tumuli or cairns of piled stone, frequently with multiple burials in the same monument.[6] However, by the protohistoric period (1000–500 B.C.E.) the more common pattern was for individual monuments to be constructed within

3 Daniels 1989.

4 Mattingly et al. 2003; Mattingly et al. forthcoming, a and b.

5 Aumassip and Tauveron 1993: 77; Cremaschi and Di Lernia 1998: 217–41. Some burials show signs of mummification by desiccation before interment; Cremaschi and Di Lernia 1998: 219.

6 Aumassip and Tauveron 1993: 77; Di Lernia and Manzi 2002; Di Lernia et al. 2001; *Encyclopédie Berbère*, fasc. 9, s.v. bazinas: 1404–06.

broad funerary zones in the landscape. During the period of the Garamantian ascendancy (500 B.C.E.–500 C.E.) there was a series of major changes in funerary architecture, ritual behaviour, and cemetery morphology. This sets the Fazzan apart from other areas of the Sahara at this time.

Although many aspects of the Garamantian funerary panoply are unique to that civilization, some are paralleled in other areas of the Sahara.[7] The Tuareg term *adebni* (plural *idebnan*) designates pre-Islamic Saharan funerary monuments of all types. The most impressive of these monuments are the so-called key-hole enclosures around tumuli, or the antennae tombs (also frequently referred to as V-shaped monuments).[8] But there is a great range of simpler tumuli and stone monuments also included in the general category.[9]

## Burial Typology

The presence of vast cemeteries all along the foot of the escarpment that marked the southern edge of the Wadi al-Ajal is one of the most remarkable features of the region (fig. 6.2). In 1933, the Italian archaeologist Giacomo Caputo paid a local sheikh to count tombs all along the Wadi al-Ajal, using local people to carry out the 'census.' The initial total of 45,000 was instantly recognized to seriously underestimate the visible numbers, and parts of the work were redone, yielding a total figure of ca 60,000.[10] The British archaeologist Charles Daniels later argued that this was itself a massive under-representation and suggested that the true total was closer to 120,000.[11] There is no reason to doubt that the vast majority of these are pre-Islamic monuments, as almost invariably the only diagnostic ceramic material from these sites is Garamantian and many are aceramic.

There is significant variation in the morphology of these many burials, reflecting differing chronological, regional, and social factors.[12] However, previous work has stopped short of devising a systematic typology for the

7 Milburn 1993, 1996.

8 Milburn 1981.

9 Camps 1961 remains the classic work, though its focus is primarily the Maghreb and the West Sahara; cf. also *Encyclopédie Berbère*, s.v. adebni, fasc. 2: 119–25; Paris 1984, 1996. Much of the published literature is rather impressionistic, but a number of more detailed regional studies or surveys have been carried out in southern Algeria and Niger, such as Paris 1984 and Savary 1966.

10 Caputo 1951: 210–12.

11 Daniels 1989: 49.

12 See Caputo 1951: 241–406, esp. 399–406; Daniels 1971: 265–68; Ruprechtsberger 1997: 51–65, for descriptions of the physical form of tombs.

Figure 6.2 General view of dense Garamantian cemetery, Wadi al-Ajal (photo: Fazzan Project)

funerary monuments, often using very broad catch-all terms to describe them (for example, cairns, chouchets). In preparing for publication the results of Daniels's survey work and my own recent fieldwork, I have devised a new form of classification for the tombs and associated features.[13]

Let us consider first two elite types of burial of distinctive character.

### *Mausolea*

This term is restricted to a class of monument constructed using ashlar-quality masonry and following Mediterranean architectural traditions (columns, capitals, pilasters, cornices and mouldings, pediments). They resemble a type of mausoleum of Hellenistic-Roman type that was common in Tripolitania, the Mediterranean end of the major trans-Saharan route passing through Fazzan.[14] However, in describing them as mausolea, we must admit that, where excavation has been attempted, no burial has been

13 The work of Di Lernia and Manzi (2002: 25–156) on a neighbouring region has produced an overlapping typology but one that reveals significant local differences in terms of monument types.

14 Barker et al. 1996: 144–48.

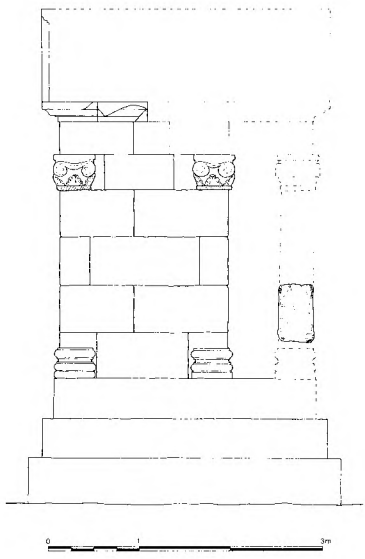

Figure 6.3 The mausoleum at Qasr Watwat (UAT 1), reconstruction drawing

Figure 6.4 Aerial view of the pyramid cemetery at al-Hatiyah (ELH 2) (photo: Fazzan Project)

located within or below any of the Fazzanese examples, and there is a possibility that they served as cenotaphs or funerary 'temples' (fig. 6.3). The potentially different use to which the Mediterranean architectural form was put in Garamantian funerary ritual is significant.

### *Pyramid Tombs*

The Wadi al-Ajal contains at least eight cemeteries featuring mud-brick pyramid-like tombs,[15] though not all appear to have been built as true pyramids of equal sides and even slope. Some examples resemble rather more the obelisk or tower-tombs known in the pre-desert, in that they consist of a pyramid form atop a square tower-like base.[16] The most famous cemeteries are those at al-Kharaiq (CHA 1) and al-Hatiyah (ELH 1 and 2) (fig. 6.4).

### *Other Grave Types* (fig. 6.5)

Type 1: Simple cairns. Very large numbers of burials in the Wadi al-Ajal consist of simple cairns and only close examination or excavation can sometimes distinguish more accurately between various sub-types. Cairns are the most widespread and common type of pre-Islamic burial in the Sahara and parts of the Maghreb.[17]

Type 2: Shaft burials. This group covers a range of features where the most significant element of the burial structure is a shaft (mostly circular or oval). Surface traces consist at most of rings or low piles of stones. These types are quite common in the nucleated cemeteries of Garamantian date. Some shafts appear to have been uncovered, but many were capped with overlapping rough piled slabs (fig. 6,5, 2c).

Type 3: Drum cairns and drum tombs. These comprise a class of circular burial with built outer walls and flattish tops. The interior fill is generally of loosely piled stone, but can also include layers of gravel and chippings. The distinction between a drum cairn and a drum tomb is largely a subjective one based on the quality of the coursing and construction of the outer perimeter wall. The rough coursed walls of drum cairns tend to be

15 Ayoub 1968: 59–61; Caputo 1951: 363–73; Daniels 1970: 34–35, 1971: 267, 1989: 49; el-Rashedy 1988: 92–94; Ruprechtsberger 1997: 54.

16 Barker et al. 1996: 144–48.

17 Camps 1961; Milburn 1993.

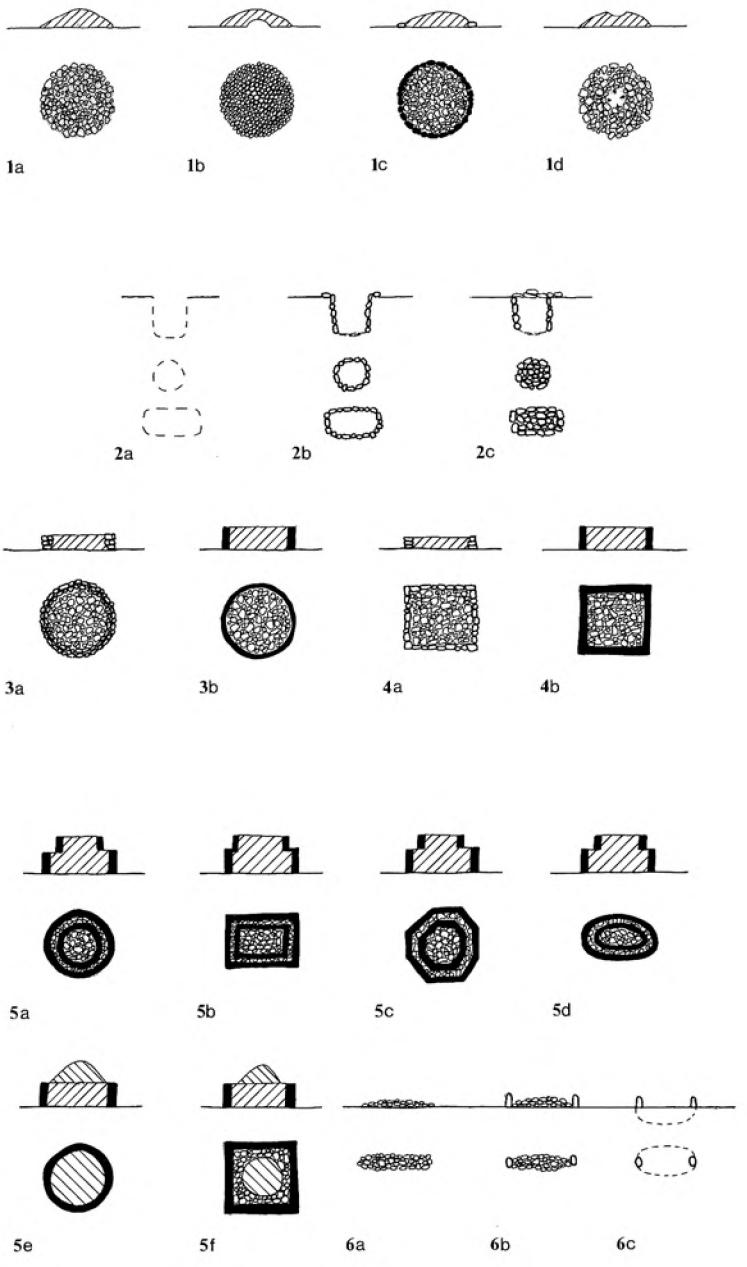


Figure 6.5 Burial typology

Figure 6.6 Type 5b stepped tombs (TAG 1). The outer face was originally covered in a 'mud-plaster' (photo Fazzan Project)

lower than the well-coursed, carefully jointed walls of drum tombs. The underlying burial structure will most likely be a built stone cist or a shaft, with shafts being more common with the tomb type. Some examples use corbelling in the centre of the drum.

Type 4: Square or rectangular built cairns or tombs. These are similar to type 3, but consist of square and rectangular burials with a vertical outer wall and flattish tops. Again, the prime distinction between a built cairn and a tomb concerns the quality of the construction of the perimeter wall. Rougher coursed (and often lower) versions are generally to be classified as built square cairns, with better constructed examples, with more regular coursing, classified as square tombs. The underlying burial structures will most likely be a built stone cist or a shaft, with shafts being more common with the tomb type.

Type 5: Stepped tombs. An important class of burials consists of stepped monuments, in a variety of shapes (fig. 6.6). The stages generally have vertical sides, but some examples of mound cairns set on a built base have also been recognized. The most common types are quadrangular and circular stepped structures (types 5b and 5a) and these occur in both stone

and mudbrick construction. Both types were often treated with an external mud-plaster coating. Rarely does more than a second storey survive, but examples with three stages are known.

Type 6: Simple graves. The principal form of burial under Islam consists of a north-south aligned grave, often demarcated at the surface by a low mound or by small stones marking the head or foot end of a grave.

*Associated Features*

Some tombs are associated with other features:
1 'Hands,' 'horns,' or other stelae
2 Offering tables and related structures
3 Square or rectangular funerary enclosures.

## **Typology of Stelae** (fig. 6.7)

Many pre-Islamic burials in the Wadi al-Ajal were once marked by stelae of various types. The predominant types of stelae have in the past generally been classified as 'hands' and 'horns.'[18]

'Hands' are formed of four vertical and symmetrically arranged 'digits,' while 'horns' are V-shaped and more sharply pointed. At first sight the contrast between the two types of stelae is clearcut, though the significance of the two broad styles of stelae is unclear and it is not possible to suggest criteria by which to distinguish between their use (whether chronological, relating to tomb type, status/sex of deceased, or region of the wadi). However, the classification below suggests that despite the distinctions between the two broad groups, there are a number of general similarities that hint that they are closely related symbolically. Horns frequently occur in pairs (making four points in total), giving them a much more similar appearance to hands than has previously been appreciated. Similarly, many 'hands' were evidently manufactured in three pieces (see type 5) and the separate outer points and the central pincer-like element of the type 5a or the sharply pointed main element of type 5c can easily be mistakenly identified as parts of 'horn' type stelae of type 6c/6a. All types of stelae are most commonly found against the east side of the tomb, though in the most densely packed cemeteries, where graves abut one an-

18 On the stelae, see Caputo 1937: 315, 1951: 248–51, 408–12; Daniels 1971: 266; el-Rashedy 1988: 97–103; Ruprechtsberger 1989: 55–57, figs 58–61, 74, 85–87; 1997: 45–46, 50, 54–55, 60.

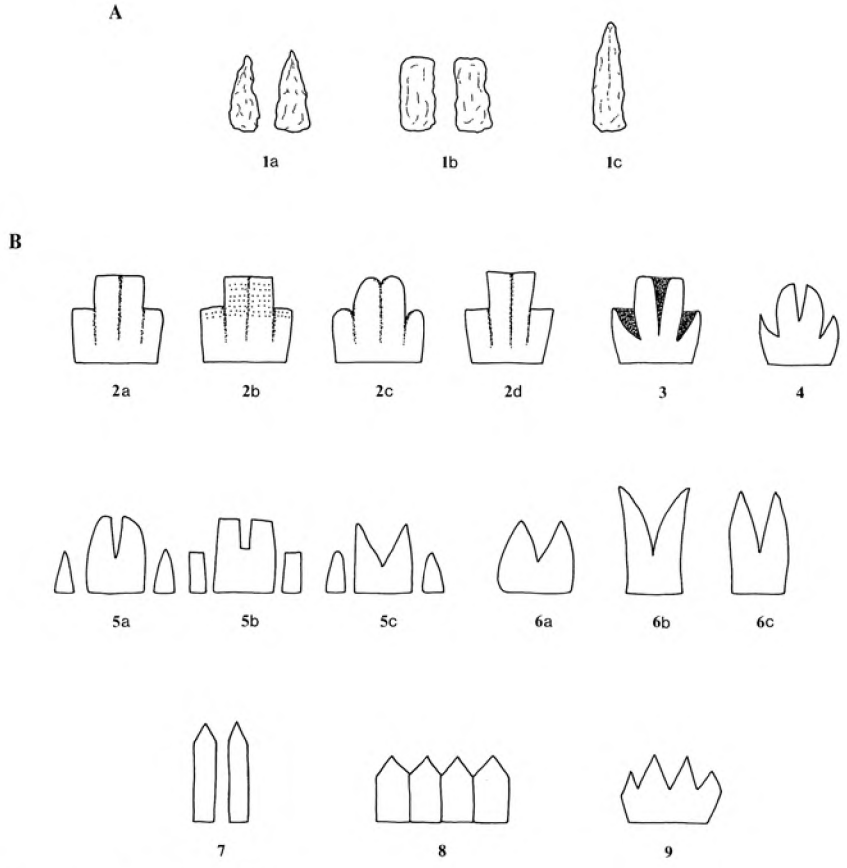


Figure 6.7 Typology of stelae

other, examples are also found on the west side (though where there is a choice, the east side is preferred) (fig. 6.8). Stele of all types were generally paired with offering tables or similar vessels, which were normally placed directly adjacent to the stelae. Traces of red paint survive on a number of examples, notably on a number of 'horns' of type 6b and 6c and on the 'picket fence' type 8 stelae from Saniat bin Huwaydi. It has also been recorded on the more common four-digit type 2 'hand';[19] it is likely that many other stelae were originally painted and the red ochre has simply weathered away. Several examples of type 2 hands at ZOU 2 and GSC

19 Caputo 1951: 361.

Figure 6.8 Dense Garamantian cemetery with numerous stelae (and offering tables) placed against the east face of tombs (ZOU 2) (photo: Fazzan Project)

31 have rows of painted dots and have been designated as a separate type (type 2b).

## Offering Tables and Similar Structures

Offering tables are a common feature of classic Garamantian-period cemeteries, and the antecedents of the tradition can be traced in the placing of ceramic and stone bowls alongside tombs in early dispersed cemeteries.[20] The density of offering tables varies from cemetery to cemetery, but Daniels (1971: 266) believed it was greatest in cemeteries with large numbers of stepped tombs.[21] The size of the offering tables varies, with the largest examples from the so-called Royal Cemetery near Jarma no less than 1.6 m × 73 cm × 39 cm.

In my classification, types 1 to 3 are believed to represent an evolutionary sequence that culminated with the standard offering table of type 4, but the precise dating is unclear and earlier forms may have continued in

20 On the offering tables, see Caputo 1951: 248–51, 408–12; Daniels 1971: 266; el-Rashedy 1988; Ruprechtsberger 1989: 55–57, figs 58–61, 74, 85–87.

21 Daniels 1971: 266.

use alongside the developed type. The standard type 4 offering table was cut in a rectangular block, with a series of sunken compartments in which food or liquid commodities could be placed (somewhat akin to an airline meal tray).

## Structures Associated with Burials

A range of built features can be observed on tombs, some directly associated with stelae and offering tables, others possibly fulfilling a similar role of providing a preferential area for the deposition of offerings at the tomb. An important aspect of the funerary structures was the provision of a place for offerings to be left, most commonly on the east face of the tomb.

## Cemetery Morphology

There is a basic contrast between dispersed cairn cemeteries and later nucleated cemeteries.[22] In very broad terms, eight main variants on pre-Islamic cemetery morphology can be proposed, with the first five being applicable to the escarpment zone and the second three to the depression floor or oasis zone (fig. 6.9).

Dispersed simple cairns (mainly of type 1) run up the escarpment, often covering the entire zone from lower slopes and terraces, to a high level on the steeper slopes (Models 1–2). Colluvial fans are favoured zones for placement. Overall the density is fairly low and the limits of cemeteries can be difficult to define, with cairns more or less continuous along stretches of several kilometres in length. The ancient conception may have been more that of a burial 'zone' than of a 'cemetery' as such (fig. 6.10).

Dispersed cemeteries include type 3 drum cairns alongside type 1 cairns, with signs of some clustering of burials, especially around the larger drum cairns, and the introduction of proto-stelae and stone bowls and proto-tables. This type probably represents the introduction of new forms of burial and funerary features into existing dispersed burial zones.

The nucleated escarpment cemetery (Model 3) often combines a range of tomb types, from simple shaft burials (type 2) to drum cairns/tombs (type 3), square and rectangular forms (type 4), and stepped tombs (type 5). Evolved stelae and offering tables are reasonably common (generally placed on the east side of burials). A key aspect of the nucleated cemeteries is the way in which blocks of tombs abut one another to form an overall honeycomb-like pattern. This appears to represent the accretion of

22 Ibid.

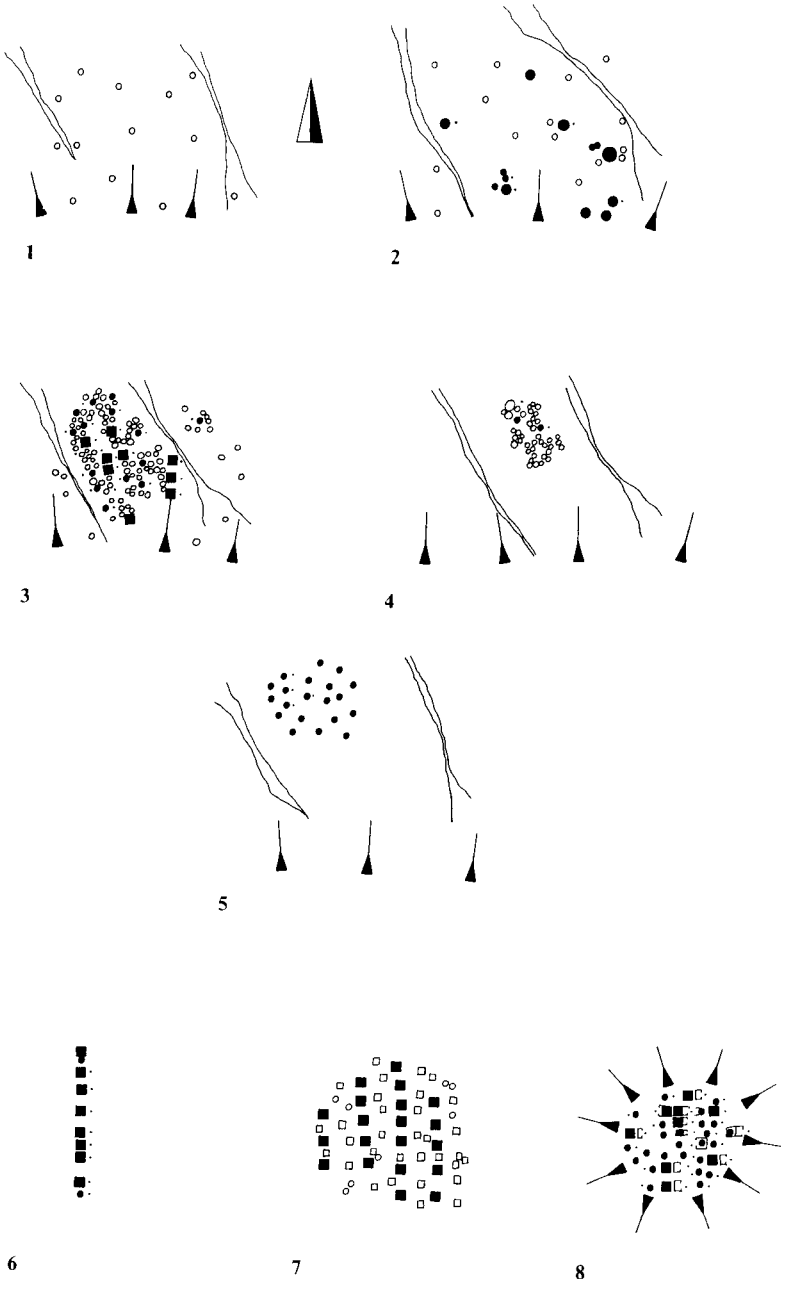


Figure 6.9 Models of cemetery morphology in the Garamantian heartlands

Figure 6.10 General view of cairn cemetery TAG 6, showing a dispersed pattern (cf. Figs 6.1 and 6.3). Note the lines of shafts of underground water channels (*foggaras*) that run through the funerary zone (photo Fazzan Project).

additional burials over extended periods of time, rather than construction at a single time of blocks of the honeycomb. There are hints of larger tombs being originally laid out in rows, but with the space between them subsequently having being infilled.

Some nucleated cemeteries (Model 4) consist almost entirely of non-monumental burial types (type 1 cairns or shaft burials of type 2) (fig. 6.2).

Outside the Wadi al-Ajal, some nucleated cemeteries have a different form, being much less densely packed, with more space around each tomb (Model 5). A smaller range of forms is present (large cairns and drum tombs in particular).

Linear cemeteries have been recorded at several points in the Wadi al-Ajal near Jarma, with a series of tombs constructed in a single file running away from the escarpment towards the wadi's centre (Model 6). The best examples are the so-called Royal Cemetery (GSC 30) or UAT 4 by the mausoleum.

Nucleated wadi-centre cemeteries are represented at one extreme by the pyramid cemeteries of al-Hatiyah (fig. 6.4) and al-Kharaiq, where there are clear elements of linear planning of the major pyramids, with evident infilling between (Model 7).

Saniat bin Huwaydi (GER 11) provides the model (Model 8) for the other type of nucleated wadi-centre cemetery, situated on a low mound. Space seems to have been at a premium, with superposition as well as infilling taking place. The cemetery has elements of an original planned layout, but this has been distorted by the density of successive phases of burials. The similarity with type 3 is clear.

In chronological terms, type 1 cemeteries in the above list and on figure 6.9 are thought to be primarily of protohistoric or early Garamantian date (though it is possible that some of the dispersed cairns are also of the post-Garamantian non-Islamic phase). Type 2 cemeteries appear to date mainly to the latter centuries B.C.E., to judge from sparse surface finds and the presence of the presumed early variants of stelae and offering vessels. Types 3 to 4 and 6 to 8 appear to be classic Garamantian, covering the early centuries C.E. Type 5 may span the latter centuries B.C.E. and early centuries C.E. (since in the areas where it is found burial types show less variation or development). I shall focus my remarks on the Garamantian period (broadly 500 B.C.E.–500 C.E.).

### Burials of Early–Mid-Garamantian Date (ca 500–1 B.C.E.)

The intensification of burial activity and the first steps towards more nucleated clusters appears to date to the latter centuries B.C.E., but certainty is impossible given the rarity of imported diagnostics and the continuing low frequency of grave goods in general. Important changes in burial activity are the appearance of larger and more elaborate 'elite' burials and the use of proto-stelae and offering vessels in association with some burials. The east side of tombs was favoured for stelae and offerings. Some cemetery areas of this date are cut through by irrigation channels called *foggaras* (fig. 6.10), but there are examples of drum cairns and stepped tombs overlying foggara shafts also. The intensification of cemetery construction along the escarpment may in part have related to the exploitation of the underlying aquifer for irrigation and an increased desire to stake out, by means of landscape markers, clan or sub-tribal rights to the water.

### Burials of Classic Garamantian Date (ca 1–500 C.E.)

The nucleated escarpment cemeteries mark the culmination of the process begun in the preceding phase. Social status was reflected in and augmented by funerary display, involving the type and scale of monument constructed, the wealth and number of grave goods included, and the erection of prominent markers and tables for regular offerings to the deceased.

The fine-quality stoneworking of many of the stelae and offering tables attests to specialist craftspeople supplying the market. The very high density of tombs in these cemeteries suggests other changes as well, since there was still ample space around the cemeteries for burials to have been more spaced out. On the one hand, this might indicate tighter social controls, where the limits of burial grounds were closely defined and tomb construction controlled. On the other hand, it might also reflect closer social bonds between elite and non-elite elements in society, or a belief that the power of ancestors was enhanced by strength of numbers.

The reasons for the tight nucleation of wadi-centre burial grounds are easier to explain, in view of the extensive irrigated agriculture in that zone, which would likely have imposed real limits on the outward growth of cemeteries. Linear arrangements of burials, in both the nucleated cemeteries and the single-file alignments are further indications of increased social controls on the use of space (reflected also in aspects of regularity in urban and village plans).

The overall distribution of cemeteries along the Wadi al-Ajal is impressive testimony to the scale and extent of Garamantian settlement in the Wadi. It is clear that most cemeteries were reasonably close to settlements, and the richer cemeteries offer valuable clues to the location of the larger settlements within the oasis zone.

However, there appears to be a strong correlation between the most extraordinary of the monumental cemeteries and the centre of Garamantian power around Jarma. All the mausolea, the pyramid tombs, and the largest stepped tombs are found within a 30-kilometre radius of the Garamantian capital. Although there are important monumental cemeteries in the east part of the Wadi al-Ajal, they are not on a par with the most prestigious of the elite burials closer to the centre of power. Garamantian burials in other parts of Fazzan do not closely follow the model established for the Wadi al-Ajal, and the elements of the classic Garamantian cemetery (stepped tombs, 'hand' stelae, and offering tables) are not always represented.

Most of the other outlying districts controlled by the Garamantes appear to have followed a less expansive mortuary tradition, based to a greater extent on drum tombs and large cairn burials (Qasr ash-Sharaba, Qasr Mara, and Ghat).[23] At all these sites, imported Roman wares show their contemporaneity with the Wadi al-Ajal cemeteries, but their less densely nucleated plans and the lack of developed offering tables and stelae suggest that specific regional cultural differences existed.

23 Caputo 1951: 386–91, 455–58; see also Liverani (1999: 32–33) for a photo of the cemetery at Aghram Nadarif to the south of Ghat.

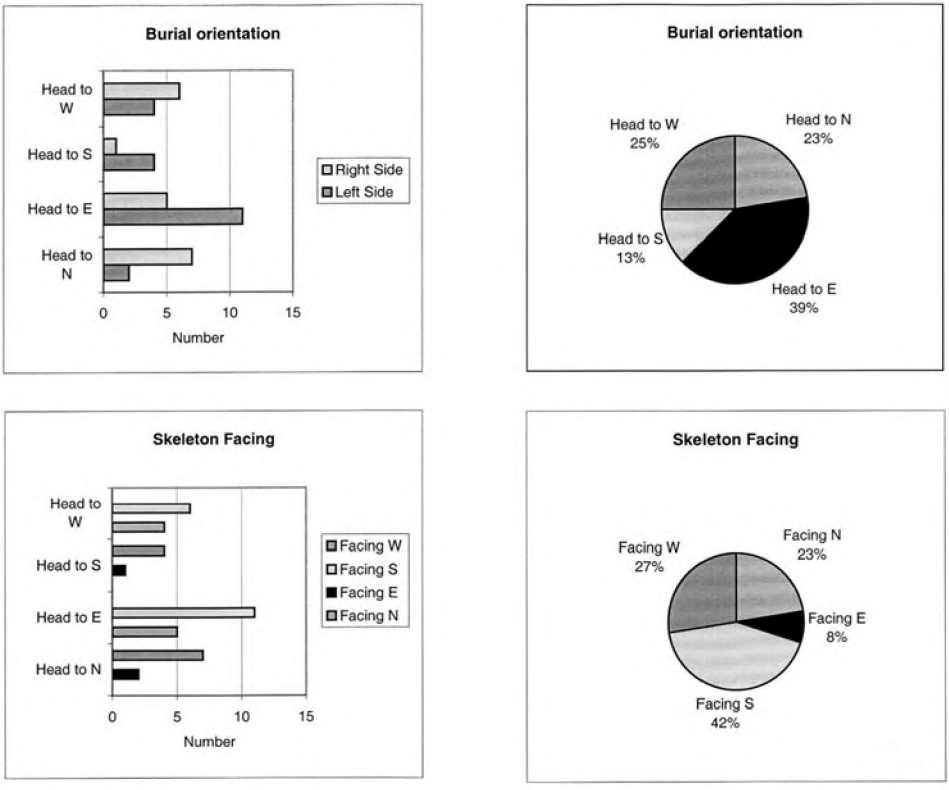


Figure 6.11 Burial orientation

## Evidence of Funerary Ritual

There have been over 200 tombs excavated in Wadi al-Ajal, but none has been published hitherto to modern standards. Cremation burials were exceedingly rare and seem to be limited to the Garamantian period.[24] The predominant form of burial was inhumation, with the body in a crouched position lying on either the left or right side (and occasionally on the back). Detailed evidence regarding the position of the skeleton and its orientation is only available on a small number of the excavated burials (fig. 6.11). However, a few comments can be made on the available data. First, the

24 I know of only three cremations, referred to by Ayoub, 1968 (tomb A2.3); Caputo 1951: 268–70; el-Rashedy 1988: 95.

choice of laying the body on its right side or left side does not appear to have been determined by social convention. Both male and female skeletons have been found on either flank and the overall numbers split almost equally (48% / 52%). On the other hand, there is some preference overall for laying the head to the east, with west and north orientations quite common, but a south orientation rare. This can in part be accounted for by the pattern observed in the excavated cemetery of Saniat bin Huwaydi, where many tombs were accompanied by offering tables or stelae against either their east or west elevation, with the skull of the corpse in the grave shaft below normally placed in the same orientation as these surface markers.[25] So the larger numbers of graves with an overall orientation of the body on an east-west axis (64%) is not surprising. There also appears to be a significant preference being expressed in the direction in which the skull faced within the burial (a body laid on its right side, with head to west, will face south). South emerges as the most common choice (42%), with west (27%) and north (23%) also quite frequent. East (8%) is substantially under-represented as a proportion of all north-south oriented burials (36% of total burials with detailed records). Some bodies were clearly laid on their backs, with legs drawn up to chest.[26] The explanation of this may be connected to the Garamantian use of headrests; numerous burials have yielded traces of wooden headrests below the skull.[27] Caputo noted the unusual position of several skulls, angled upwards in the fill of the tombs as though supported at the time of burial on something – presumably further evidence of headrests.[28] Pauphillet's excavations of late antique burials at Tijirhi also yielded evidence of at least three wooden headrests and these may be assumed to have been present in many other graves of Fazzan.[29]

The bodies seem to have been not only carefully laid out at death in the crouched position, but also wrapped in characteristic coverings for transport to the grave. In optimum conditions, Garamantian tombs regularly yield traces of textile, leather, or basketry/matting wrapped around the body.

Most of the excavated tombs in Wadi al-Ajal have only one burial, though it was not uncommon to find a secondary interment added later.[30] There are hints that bodies were sometimes moved around long after death.

25 Mattingly et al. forthcoming, b.

26 Daniels 1971: pl. vii.

27 On headrests, el-Rashedy 1988: 108, 111; Daniels 1971: 267; full report on Zinkekra burials in Mattingly et al., forthcoming, b.

28 Caputo 1951: 406.

29 Bellair et al. 1953: 79; Bellair and Pauphillet 1959 for the date.

30 Secondary interments: Pace et al. 1951: 377–78; Bellair et al. 1953: 75–76.

Caputo found the mixed bones of at least two individuals in a grave at Takarkibah, where they had been rearranged in the rough semblance of a human skeleton![31] Some unrobbed graves have also lacked some parts of the skeleton.[32] Although the expectation in so hot a climate would be for quick interment, it is possible that some degree of exposure of the bodies took place, perhaps aiming at mummification through desiccation. However, a significant difference between Fazzan and many of the oases closer to Egypt is the lack of evidence for systematic mummification with textile wrappings in the former area, whereas it seems to have been practised on a large scale in the eastern Libyan Sahara, at oases such as Jiarabub, Siwa, and Bahariya.[33] On the other hand, several graves have yielded traces of organic substances on excavation, including an example at al-Abyad with a resinous substance over the two skeletons.[34] More significantly, a large number of burials have been recorded with red ochre staining on the bones. At Saniat bin Huwaydi this was noted in three. Pauphillet suggested that the red colouring was originally a liquid compound placed over the corpse in leather containers.[35] The importance of the colour red in Garamantian mortuary beliefs is emphasized by the frequent use of red inside tombs as well as on stelae and outer surfaces. The importance of red ochre to the Libyans was noted already by Herodotus.[36]

Grave goods were an important element of the classic Garamantian funerary tradition and reveal much about the nature of one side of the commercial contact between the Fazzan and the Roman empire (fig. 6.12). Grave goods were associated with all ages of burial, including children. Several child burials had associated beads/necklaces or amulets. The richest burials date to the first to fourth centuries C.E. and are concentrated around the Garamantian capital at Jarma. A wealth of Roman pottery, amphorae, glass, and faience has been recorded by the various excavations.[37] In a recent and illuminating study, Fontana (1995) has observed that the range of imports included in the tombs exhibit a marked uniformity in key respects. Although the richness of the grave assemblages varies

31 Caputo 1951: 375.
32 Bellair et al. 1953: 87–88, 95–96.
33 Mohammed 1998; Fakhry 1974.
34 Caputo 1951: 377–80, 408.
35 Bellair et al. 1953: 76–78.
36 Red ochre, Bates 1914: 140; Herodotus 4.191, 4.194. Archaeologically, red ochre is attested in Saharan burials from the late Neolithic to at least the seventh century C.E.: Camps 1997: 187, 190; Reygasse 1950: 98.
37 See, *inter alia*, Caputo 1937: 320–30; 1951: 247–49 (glass and jewellery), 252–391 (descriptions of individual tombs), 391–99 (glass); Ruprechtsberger 1997: 65–67.

Figure 6.12 Rich assemblage of imported goods included in a second–third century burial at Saniat bin Huwaydi (GER 11) (photo Daniels archive)

considerably, the chief components commonly included wine amphorae and the panoply of drinking utensils – jugs, cups, and glass beakers. Oil amphorae and oil lamps are another distinctive element. Yet another aspect concerns the intrinsic fragility of the material carried over the desert. The preference for glass vessels, especially drinking cups and large open forms (the same is true of the ceramic finewares also), must have tested the ingenuity of the traders who brought the material. Overall, one suspects that the established pattern of these funerary assemblages reflects Garamantian choices and preferences for certain aspects of Roman material culture.

However, previous work on the grave goods has perhaps tended to overlook the evidence of other elements in the material culture that reflect Saharan traditions. Elaborately painted ceramic vessels and incense burners are present in many burials, alongside the headrests, mats, and leather shrouds already mentioned above. Necklaces of ostrich eggshell, glass, carnelian, and amazonite beads are common in many tombs, along with stone amulets. However, metal artefacts are rare in the excavated burials (though these items will have been the prime targets for later tomb robbers). At least one metalworking village involved in iron and probably copper alloy working is known.

Table 6.1 Patterns of consumption of imported and Saharan material culture in the Garamantian funerary tradition

| Foreign material culture | Saharan material culture |
|---|---|
| Wine amphorae, jugs and pitchers, drinking cups, imported pottery, glassware (drinking cups and large tableware), faience, oil amphorae, oil lamps, glass beads | Local painted ceramics, incense burners, ostrich eggshell and stone beads, ivory(?), metal goods (rare), saddle and rotary querns, textiles, leather, basketry and matting, wooden vessels, headrests, red ochre deposits on skeletons |

Some graves contained a decidedly idiosyncratic assemblage. One tomb near Jarma yielded a few glass beads, a seashell, a stone spatula, and two blocks of pumice. The fragments of textiles, leather, and matting or basketry present in the best-preserved burials suggest that organic materials were an important component of the burial assemblage. Several burials excavated by Caputo contained food remains and cinders, possibly from food offerings made at the grave side and incorporated in the burial.[38] Daniels found at least two graves with deposits of carbonized dates (GER 11.50, ZIN 13.202).

In summary, the burial assemblages seem to reflect the superposition of two distinct funerary traditions, one involving the use of external status indicators (imported trade goods – many connected with conspicuous consumption of food and drink), the other with an underlying African set of traditions (table 6.1).

The offering tables, stelae, 'altars,' and funerary enclosures must have had significant roles to play in Garamantian funerary ritual. These features suggest that contact was maintained between the living and the dead. Contact probably went beyond depositing offerings and then going home. Divination through dreams at the tombs of ancestors has been recognized as an African trait from early antiquity to recent times.[39] The Libyan practice of sleeping by tombs to divine the future was reported by Herodotus (4.172) and Mela (1.8.45) and has been observed among the Tuareg in the nineteenth century, though interestingly it was pre-Islamic monuments (*idabnan*) that were selected for this practice, not Islamic burials.[40] The provision of funerary enclosures in front (generally on the east side) of tombs is suggestive of this practice of incubation.

38 Caputo 1951, 407–08.

39 Libyan ancestor cults, see Brett and Fentress 1998: 343–36; Camps 1986; Daniels 1970: 32; Mattingly 1995: 207; 1999: 394–95; 2003: 166–70.

40 *Encyclopédie Berbère*, s.v. adebni: 119–25.

## Understanding Garamantian Burial in Its Saharan Context

The Garamantian funerary complex incorporated status symbols (both architectural and material cultural) from the Mediterranean world. But it also followed a pattern that was far removed from Greco-Roman norms. A few key aspects and peculiarities should be noted:

- The importance of the east side of the tomb for offerings, reflected also in the fact that many bodies were aligned east–west;
- but skeletons were mostly laid so as not to face east, with south being the most favoured direction to face.
- Graves were marked with four pointed stelae, in a variety of styles (no correlation can be made between different styles and the sex of the deceased).
- Offering tables and 'altar'-like structures were commonly attached to tombs.
- Although some aspects of Roman material culture were widely adopted, the range of artefacts was fairly narrow and most related to feasting and drinking.
- Most other aspects of funerary ritual were largely unchanged from late Neolithic traditions (crouched inhumations, burials wrapped in leather, cloth, or matting, presence of red ochre, headrests, beads and necklaces).

The Garamantian heartlands stand out from neighbouring areas of the Sahara for a number of reasons:

- There was significant nucleation of cemeteries during the Garamantian heyday for social reasons (although there was plenty of space for burials to have been more widespread). To put this another way, we see the emergence of 'cemeteries' in place of 'broad funerary zones.'
- There was also a far greater experimentation and variation in burial typology in comparison with the normal background of Saharan society.
- There was a recurrent fascination with pointed shapes (pyramids, conical cairns, stelae) and stepped shapes.

Many of these key aspects of Garamantian funerary tradition find echoes in the mortuary archaeology of Roman Africa – significant alignments, offering tables, the preference for pointed and stepped forms of tombs, provision of places in cemeteries where incubation was possible (especially

at the tombs of the most notable people in society). Perhaps we can identify these peculiarities of Maghrebian cemeteries of Roman date as typically African traits.

Finally, there is a theory that some of the people who became known as the Garamantes were incomers into this part of the Sahara in the first millennium B.C.E. However, the funerary evidence cannot demonstrate the truth or otherwise of the proposition. There are divergences between Garamantian funerary traditions and those of other oases of the eastern Sahara, and, as so often in human activity, cultural identity does not appear to have been imported as a fully developed package. Insofar as we can identify a particular Garamantian cultural complex, it would appear to be something formed within Fazzan (and indeed within a specific part of Fazzan focused on the Wadi al-Ajal). In developing a cultural identity, the Garamantes borrowed ideas, structural forms, and iconography from a variety of sources and blended them in a unique way.

Faraj El-Rashedy (1988) has stressed the parallels with Egyptian funerary practices (use of headrests, offering tables, stelae) and tomb types (stepped and pyramid tombs) and posits close cultural links between the two areas – perhaps as a result of westward migration of people. But he concluded, as I do, that the precise funerary rite followed was unique to Fazzan and must have been developed *in situ* as a result of diverse influences. That seems the only safe conclusion. Garamantian culture and society was something that came together in Fazzan, uniting diverse influences and being subsequently affected by contacts between the Garamantes and their neighbours.

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# 7

# Changing Urban Landscapes: Burials in North African Cities from the Late Antique to Byzantine Periods

*Anna Leone*

This paper takes its starting point from a common but hitherto little-analysed feature of many Roman cities in North Africa – the placement of tombs within the floors of former temples, houses, churches, and other urban buildings. While the cuttings for these graves are evident to any visitor today, they are nearly invisible in the published archaeological reports on these sites. Archaeologists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century scarcely mention late graves, even when it is apparent from the existing remains or from inscriptions that such graves existed. Even excavations of more modern times often report these graves only summarily, if at all.

The presence of graves within the classical urban core reflects a transformation in both funerary practices and, perhaps, in the concept of the city at a time when North Africa was undergoing changes in its social and economic systems, including the diffusion of Christianity and the disappearance of the Roman Empire and its administration. These phenomena visibly influenced mortuary practices, making analysis of evolving funerary procedures necessary for an understanding of the period. In the past, most mortuary analysis focused on the social status of the deceased,[1] leaving aside problems related to the spatial distribution and topographical situation of graves. However, these latter features are crucial elements for understanding the evolution of society and the transformation of 'urban landscapes.'

Graves inside former private or public buildings have often been considered as randomly distributed. Yet Lynne Goldstein has persuasively argued

1 Härke 1997: 20.

that the 'organizational principles' of the society are reflected in the 'spatial separation and ordering of the funerary area.'[2] She demonstrates the necessity of understanding whether graves were organized in a system, and what rules may have governed that system. In North African cities, the presence of a cemetery church often explains the clustering of graves in a particular spot, but numerous groups of graves are also found in locations where no cemetery church can be identified, although other religious buildings may have existed in the vicinity.

In this chapter I examine the phenomenon of isolated urban graves. I analyse in detail data from Thysdrus and Hadrumetum in Byzacena and Carthage and Bulla Regia in Zeugitania, and mention other towns more briefly. I focus on two particular aspects of these graves: distribution and typology.[3] I consider the changing topographical distribution of these graves from Late Antiquity to the Vandal and the Byzantine periods (fourth to seventh centuries C.E.).[4]

Where possible, I also examine the evidence for chronological patterns in the typology of these graves. I do not focus on graves grouped around urban churches, as the reason for their placement is already abundantly clear,[5] but rather examine individual graves or groups of graves that have previously appeared to be randomly placed within cities. It seems possible to argue that the distribution of graves in these cities often was not random or casual, but was connected to the presence of religious buildings, streets, and residential areas. In Carthage, the evidence seems to suggest changing patterns through different periods. The individuality of each city should be stressed at the outset; I do not seek to create a template that can be imposed on every city nor to give an elaborate image of changes in these cities, because data are sometimes too imprecise and uncertain. The main aim is, instead, to identify some hypothetical patterns and illustrate them in order to give hints for future research. Some parallels can be drawn, especially between Rome and Carthage. If one sets these results into the context of recent research on urban transformations in Late Antiquity, it seems possible (although not for all the periods here analysed and not for all the sites) to suggest the presence of a 'programmed de-structuring' of the city.

2 Goldstein 1981: 57.

3 This paper does not investigate in detail the Christian perception of the relationship between the dead and the living (the *cura animarum*). For a synthesis and bibliography on this topic, see Cantino Wataghin and Lambert 1998.

4 The term 'Byzantine' is used in an African perspective in this paper.

5 Cemetery churches and associated graves will be mentioned periodically, however.

## Funerary Practices and Urban Transformations in Late Antiquity[6]

Investigation of urban graves fits into the larger context of recent research on the transformation of cities in Late Antiquity. In the past, the extensive study on this latter topic has largely polarized into two contrasting viewpoints, characterized by Bryan Ward-Perkins (1997) as 'Catastrophists and Continuists.' Catastrophists think the classical city declined (Brogiolo 1987; Liebeschuetz 2001) or even disappeared (Carandini 1993) in the late antique period. Continuists consider urban transformation as a process of evolution, which brings periodic change to existing structures (Wickham 1981; La Rocca Hudson 1986). A third and a more cautious approach positing both breakdown and continuity has developed (Lepelley 1996), arguing that post-classical cities were first de-structured and then re-structured with a new form (Ermini Pani 1998; Cantino Wataghin 1996). On the one hand, following Liebeschuetz, a collapse and a decline did take place.[7] The Roman Empire did fall, and this event certainly also affected classical Roman cities. On the other hand, these cities continued to be occupied; in North Africa urban areas were often still inhabited in the early Islamic period. Cities were transformed and adapted to new societies. In this process they were first 'de-structured' and subsequently 're-structured' with a new layout. In some cases these two phases took place at the same time, making interpretation and analysis of urban change very difficult. In Rome it has been argued (particularly for the early medieval period) that often apparently isolated groups of graves were not casual, but that their distribution was controlled and programmed.[8] The crucial point here is to determine if in North Africa it is possible to identify the same trend. This is particularly difficult because of the paucity of reliable archaeological data. The available archaeological information from North Africa, especially for the Vandal and Byzantine periods (from the second third of the fifth century to the seventh century C.E.), permits only a partial reconstruction of the funerary landscape. The archaeological data arise principally from nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century excavations directed essentially at Punic and Roman layers. In many cases later graves were not recorded, and those that are mentioned are difficult to date. Difficulties in interpreting late burials become even more pronounced if we consider that there are

6 Some scholars consider Late Antiquity to end at the fall of the Roman Empire (see Giardina 1999).

7 Liebeschuetz 2001: 4–11.

8 On this aspect see most recently Delogu 2000.

almost no differences between late-antique and Arab burials.[9] Sometimes Arab graves have coins, but they are not very common and in some cases they have not been studied. Many North African cities were occupied continuously into the Arab period, often until the ninth or tenth century, as is probable at Thuburbo Majus[10] and Belalis Maior,[11] while some others were perhaps reoccupied after a hiatus (usually between the eighth and ninth century C.E.). So, in many cases graves in urban areas are not datable, as for instance those recorded in the area around the Flavian temple in Leptis Magna, in Sabratha, and in other cities.[12]

Although chronological difficulties hinder definitive answers to these questions, this paper will try to identify some hypotheses and suggest directions for future research.

## Burials in Urban Spaces in North Africa: A Different Approach

Existing studies of urban graves focus principally on Rome[13] and Italy[14] rather than North Africa. This research focused on the relocation of burials, their link with Christianity, and the necessity of a strict connection between living and burial areas. The new relationship appears to have been encouraged first of all by the concept of the *cura animarum* (i.e., a particular bond with the dead), which was an important element in contemporary Christian practice.[15] Since this has already been the object of several studies, it will be not reconsidered here.

In North Africa investigations have mainly considered cemetery churches[16] and necropoleis,[17] while isolated urban graves have not often been analysed in detail.[18] It is important to emphasize at the outset that throughout the period in question, the majority of graves continued to be placed in extra-urban locations. Throughout the sixth century, for instance, cemetery churches continued to be the principal location for burials. Change in funerary traditions and the disappearance of epigraphy make it

9 Duval 1995: 188.
10 Frend 1983.
11 Mahjoubi 1978 and, in general, Potter 1995.
12 Fiandra 1974–75 (graves in the Flavian temples); Joly and Tommasello 1984: 4 (Sabratha).
13 Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 1993, 1994, 2000.
14 For Italy, see principally Brogiolo and Cantino Wataghin 1998.
15 For the transformation of the relationship with the dead brought about by the diffusion of Christianity, see Ariès 1977; Février 1996.
16 Duval 1986.
17 Duval 1995.
18 For Carthage, see Stevens 1995a and Leone 2002.

more difficult to follow the situation in the seventh century.[19] Continuing use of cemeteries located outside of urban areas is demonstrated, for instance, by the restoration of cemetery basilicas, such as Bir El Knissia in Carthage, in the later Byzantine period.[20] This evidence could attest to the continuity of extra-urban burial even in the Late Byzantine period.

Second, it should also be noted that in North Africa, urban graves were already frequent in the fourth and the fifth centuries C.E., that is, considerably earlier than in Italian sites that have been the focus of other studies.[21]

A third important point to consider is the definition of 'urban' space in the layout of North African cities. Most of these were unwalled.[22] Moreover, current scholarship on the larger issue of the concept and definition of urban space in North Africa, and generally in all late-antique cities, questions the utility of these terms either as topographical concepts or as an intellectual framework for understanding burials. Some scholars, for instance, have argued that the inhabitants of post-classical cities may have had a different perception of these city walls, not viewing these structures as a barrier (Cantino Wataghin 1995; Stevens 1996). Carthage, where the city wall was not built until the beginning of the fifth century, appears to confirm this interpretation.[23] Habitation areas crossed over the line of the wall in some parts, including the north-east part of the city, while in others, such as Borj Jedid,[24] the wall enclosed pre-existing funerary zones. These facts suggest that while the city wall was built as a defensive structure in case of danger, it did not function solely as a barrier, nor was it perceived as one by the inhabitants. The chronological range considered

19 In Rome a decrease of inscriptions from the end of the 6th century and the 7th century C.E. has been demonstrated. On the epigraphic traditions of Christians in Rome from the 4th century C.E. onward, see Carletti 1998, 1999, 2001. On the decline in the use of inscriptions in provincial areas, see Liebeschuetz 2001: 11.

20 Stevens 1993: 305.

21 Duval 1995: 202.

22 For a synthesis on all fortified structures and city walls recorded in North Africa, see Pringle 1981.

23 On the building of the city wall of Carthage, see Hurst and Roskams 1984: 30–36; on its value, see Stevens 1996. The course of the city wall is not fully known. Difficulties in tracing it arise particularly in the north near the coast, close to Borj Jedid, and in the western part, between the La Malga cisterns and the amphitheatre: Duval and Lézine 1959a; Duval 1972: 1099, 1997b: 349. Recent studies have modified the earlier reconstruction in the vicinity of the amphitheatre (Evans 1999).

24 Houses in the north-east periphery of the city (fig. 7.3 below, 1b): Humphrey 1980: 103–06; Borj Jedid: Lantier (1922: 23, no. 27) mentions graves dated to the 1st–2nd century C.E.

here includes different periods, during which city walls at Carthage variously appeared to be built up, left in disrepair, or subsequently restored. Obviously this situation implies that the presence of city walls surrounding urban areas had different meanings depending on the period. The analysis of the peripheral areas of Carthage is therefore especially significant.

The city's suburbs, either located just inside or outside of the urban space, offer some burials dated to different periods. On the north-west of the inhabited area, after the building of the city wall, a cemetery was placed just outside of the fortification, and it was in use in the first half of the sixth century C.E. A seventh-century tomb was found in an *insula* and a cemetery invaded the residential area from the second half of the sixth century (fig. 7.3, no. 1a).[25] All the tombs were stone cists without goods.[26] In the north-east (fig. 7.3, no. 1b), seventh-century graves were located in the peripheral neighbourhoods, which were still inhabited.[27] In the south-west part of the suburbs, at Salammbo (fig. 7.3, no. 26), two Vandal graves (in pits) were found just outside the city wall. In the seventh century C.E., stone cist burials and one in an amphora were placed inside the fortification.[28] Undated graves were also found on the western side of the city at Bir Darouts (fig. 7.3, no. 30).[29] Nearby, in the area referred to as Bir El Jebbana, a bathhouse that had fallen into disuse between the late third century and the middle of the fourth century was occupied by burials. The majority of the pottery from contexts associated with the grave deposits is dated between the mid- and the late fourth century.[30] This suggests that the bath complex was turned into a funerary area a short period after the abandonment, as was also the case with the houses at Thysdrus discussed below.

Evidence suggests that the borders of the city followed different development from the fourth to the seventh centuries, and generally isolated tombs are attributed to the Vandals and to the late Byzantine period. In this last phase in particular, the mixing between living and sepulchral areas appears evident. However, the layout of the funerary areas, variously outside or inside the city wall, suggests that the defensive structure was

25 Carandini et al. 1983: 15; Leone 2002: 239–40.

26 Carandini et al. 1983: 33.

27 Stevens 1995a: 213 n. 36; Leone 2002: 239–40. Other tombs have been found in more recent excavation just outside of the city wall. See the summary in Garrison 1993. For the continuity of life of the quarter up to the 7th century, see Humphrey 1980: 103–06.

28 Humphrey 1980: 100–04; Hurst and Roskams 1984: 19; Leone 2002: 239–40.

29 Evans 1999 and Leone 2002: 239 n. 27. Pagan graves were also found in this part of the city.

30 Rossiter 2003: 493.

not seen as a physical barrier. Its current function (i.e., whether it was in use for defence or not), rather than its location, seems to have influenced the distribution of graves (outside or inside of it).

For all the main three reasons mentioned above, in the discussions that follow, the terms 'intra or extra muros' will be carefully avoided, and 'urban areas/space' and 'extra-urban areas/space' will be used instead. The term 'urban areas' is used to define sectors of the city characterized by the principal elements of a city: that is, residential quarter, *fora*, buildings for spectacles.

## Urban Burials: An Early Phenomenon in North African Cities

Although datable material is available in relatively few cases, it is possible to argue that the phenomenon of burials in urban spaces developed early in some North African cities. The reason seems to be mainly connected to an early shrinkage of the city, owing perhaps to historical events. Thysdrus in Byzacena is significant from this point of view. Here, later graves were placed into two wealthy residences, the Maison du Paon and the Sollertiana Domus (fig. 7.1).[31] They seem to be located in a peripheral area of the city, not far from the amphitheatre, just outside of the modern town towards Sfax. Two phases related to burials have been recorded in the area: the earlier one is dated to the first half of the first century C.E., and the later one dates between the third and the fifth centuries C.E.

First of all, the presence of a necropolis of the first century C.E. could suggest that this area of the city was urbanized relatively late. Indeed, the construction of the villas, as established principally by the mosaics found in them (especially in the well-dated Sollertiana Domus), occurred during the Antonine period, when the city expanded.[32] In this expansion of the city, an area earlier in use as a necropolis was urbanized.[33] Later, presumably after the abandonment of the houses, the area was again turned into a burial sector, recreating the same space distribution of the urban and suburban landscape that had existed before the major expansion of the city. Late tombs were placed in and around the Sollertiana Domus and the Maison du Paon. Inside the first house, nine graves were found.[34] Many other tombs were found immediately to the west and south of the

31 A few of the excavated structures are still visible close to the museum.

32 Slim and Rebourg 1995: 50.

33 A similar trend is also recorded in Carthage in the wealthy quarter of Borj Jedid. Lantier (1922: 23, no. 27) mentions graves dated to the 1st–2nd century C.E. here.

34 Six in room 3, two in the peristyle, and one along the wall of the west porticoes, which connected to the Maison du Paon; see Slim 1992–93: 372; fig. 7.1 here.

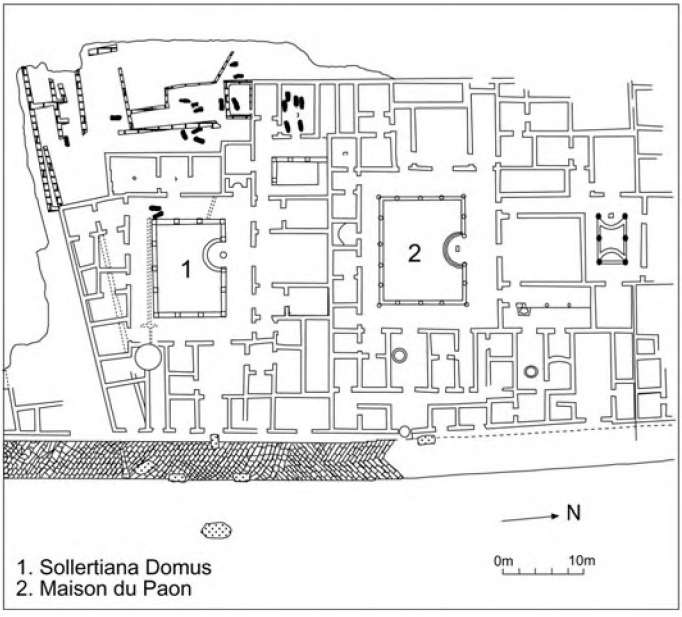



Figure 7.1 Thysdrus: plan of the Sollertiana Domus and the Maison du Paon with graves (after L. Slim 1992–93. Used by permission)

Sollertiana Domus, but only fifteen of them were excavated.[35] There were many different construction methods for these burials. Some were deeply cut and well defined. They were covered by slabs or tiles, or had one or all the walls created from vertical slabs. Others were not deeply cut, were hardly defined, and were covered just with earth. Moreover, only six of the twenty-four excavated tombs contained funerary objects, such as vases, earrings, and coins (mostly illegible).[36] The pottery included forms that began in the third century but remained in use in the fourth to fifth centuries C.E.[37]

The peripheral location of these affluent houses could imply they were included within the city for only a short period. The construction of the amphitheatre at the end of the second century and the beginning of the

35 Slim 1992–93: 377.

36 Ibid.: 372–81, 389 (coins).

37 One tomb in the Sollertiana Domus contained the following: ARS forms Hayes 181, dated between the mid-2nd and the mid-3rd century (Dulière et al. 1996: 7) and Hayes 28 (Slim 1992–93: 373) dated to the beginning of the 3rd century; African kitchen ware, Lamboglia 9A diffused until the 4th–5th centuries (Slim 1992–93: 378).

third certainly implies an era of prosperity at that time. However, its unfinished state suggests a sudden decline in the city's economy in the third century.[38] This decline could also have caused a reduction of the urban area, and perhaps the abandonment of a part of the residential quarter and its transformation back to a funerary role. The pottery and other goods in the graves seem to suggest a *terminus post quem* of the end of the third century C.E.[39] Differences in burial types and characteristics suggest that the area was used as a cemetery for a long period.[40] These graves do not appear to be associated with any Christian cult area.

At Thysdrus, then, graves were cut into abandoned structures at the edge of the city at a relatively early period, possibly as early as the third century C.E. Here the phenomenon appears to relate to the city's retraction during a period of economic decline. Graves, even though located inside urban spaces, were placed in peripheral areas and grouped together. In fact, the number of burials recorded suggests that this was probably a cemetery now at the border of the urban space, rather than a place with a few scattered tombs. This does not seem to reflect a dissolution of urban organization so much as a programmed transformation of sectors or buildings that had lost their classical function and became free spaces in the urban network.

A similar pattern is also recorded in the nearby city of Hadrumetum in the Maison des Masques, where late graves have been found.[41] Here different types of graves in different layers have been identified, suggesting that the area had become not simply the place for sporadic burials, but an organized cemetery. The house was probably abandoned some time after the mid-third century.[42] The chronology proposed for the burials

38 The decline in the city has been often connected with the revolt of Gordianus, who was elected Augustus in this city in 238 C.E. and was aided by Rome. As punishment, Maximinus destroyed a part of the city, attested also by archaeological evidence (Slim and Rebourg 1995: 7–8). It has been suggested that Gordianus financed the construction of the unfinished large amphitheatre (Kolendo 1973).

39 In general, on the pottery and goods present on late graves see Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 1994.

40 Pottery evidence seems to suggest that the funerary complex was in use until the fifth century. It remains possible that some burials were inserted later, but without the inclusion of any datable elements.

41 Foucher 1965: 33–34, 48. Graves vary from burials in amphorae to burials in stone cists. Burials were also found in the Maison du Virgile et les Muses. A Christian chapel was later constructed in this area, attesting to a complete reorganization of this sector of the city (Foucher 1965: 48 n. 31).

42 It seems that several houses in Hadrumetum were abandoned in this period (Foucher 1965: 49).

spans from the last quarter of the third century to (at least) the beginning of the fifth century.[43] Arab burials overlying graves in amphorae have also been found in another third-century house. For this reason, Foucher has suggested that the entire north and north-west quarters of the city were already abandoned and turned into a cemetery area by the end of the third century.[44] Therefore, Thysdrus and Hadrumetum, two nearby cities of Byzacena, show evidence of an early transformation of the urban area, characterized by a reduction of the city size connected with a reorganization or re-evaluation of parts of the urban network. There is not enough evidence to determine whether the transformation of houses into a funerary function is related to the presence of a Christian building nearby.

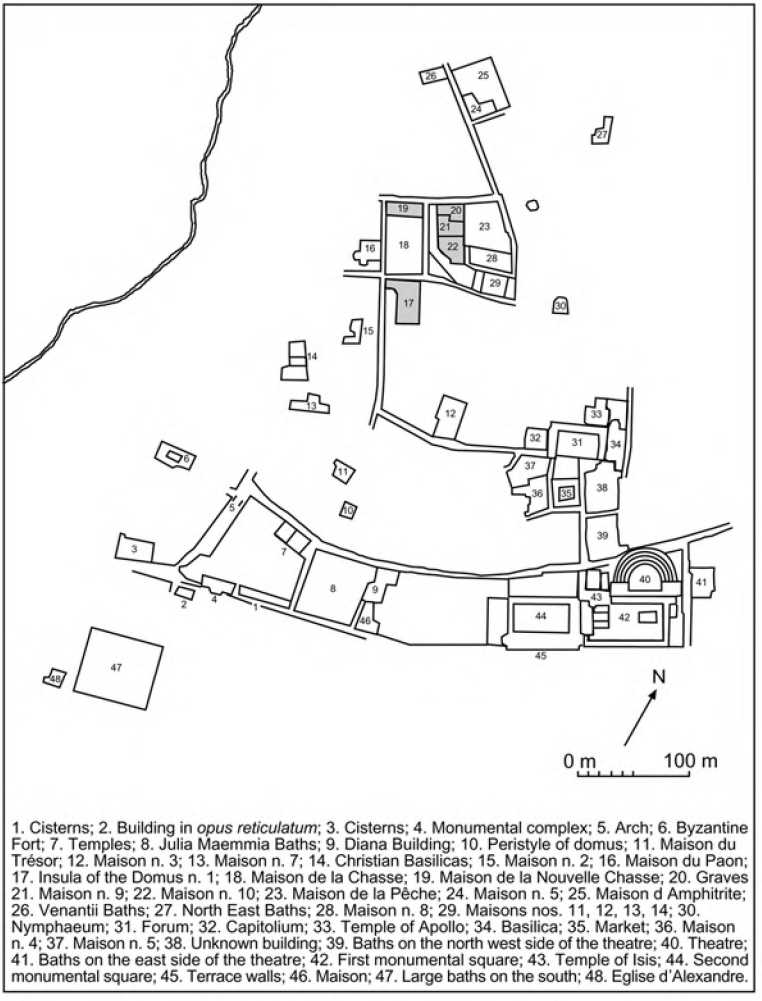
An important point to stress is the continuity of use of some of these cemeteries from Late Antiquity into the Arab period, without interruption. Such continuity highlights the survival of the funerary practices through centuries and also perhaps the maintenance of the city layout from Late Antiquity to the early Arab period.

## Poorly Dated Urban Graves

In many cities lack of precise stratigraphic information does not permit us to suggest chronologies for recorded urban graves. This is the case for graves found in the Flavian Temple in Leptis Magna, where excavations at the beginning of the twentieth century found tombs all around the fortified Severan forum.[45] Some graves placed above a natural sand heap in the south-west corner of the forum have Christian symbols. It is not possible to establish a date for other burials in the forum, which could be late Byzantine or Arab. Similarly, Christian graves were found in the area near the harbour, in front of the temple of Jupiter Dolichenus, likely in connection with a baptistery and a church found nearby.[46] These graves were probably Byzantine, but precise evidence is lacking, as the area surrounding the harbour was probably occupied in the Arab period as well.[47]

Tombs found in Sabratha in the Temple of the Unknown Divinity are usually identified as Christian.[48] They are probably related to a nearby church (Basilica I). A similar situation appears in Simitthus, where several

43 Foucher 1965: 48.
44 Ibid.: 49.
45 Bartoccini 1961.
46 Ibid.: 93; Laronde 1994: 994.
47 For the occupation of the area in the Arab period see Cirelli 2001: 431.
48 Joly and Tommasello 1984: 4.


N
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1. Cisterns; 2. Building in opus reticulatum; 3. Cisterns; 4. Monumental complex; 5. Arch; 6. Byzantine Fort; 7. Temples; 8. Julia Maemmia Baths; 9. Diana Building; 10. Peristyle of domus; 11. Maison du Trésor; 12. Maison n. 3; 13. Maison n. 7; 14. Christian Basilicas; 15. Maison n. 2; 16. Maison du Paon; 17. Insula of the Domus n. 1; 18. Maison de la Chasse; 19. Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse; 20. Graves 21. Maison n. 9; 22. Maison n. 10; 23. Maison de la Pêche; 24. Maison n. 5; 25. Maison d Amphitrite; 26. Venantii Baths; 27. North East Baths; 28. Maison n. 8; 29. Maisons nos. 11, 12, 13, 14; 30. Nymphaeum; 31. Forum; 32. Capitolium; 33. Temple of Apollo; 34. Basilica; 35. Market; 36. Maison n. 4; 37. Maison n. 5; 38. Unknown building; 39. Baths on the north west side of the theatre; 40. Theatre; 41. Baths on the east side of the theatre; 42. First monumental square; 43. Temple of Isis; 44. Second monumental square; 45. Terrace walls; 46. Maison; 47. Large baths on the south; 48. Eglise d'Alexandre.

Figure 7.2 Plan of Bulla Regia, with areas of graves marked in grey (from Leone 1994)

tombs were recorded in the forum.[49] The chronology of the graves found located in a channel in the Museum baths in Utica[50] or the tombs found in the theatre of Thugga[51] is more complicated to define.

49 Toutain 1892: 339; Rakob et al. 1993: 41; Rakob 1995: 43.

50 Dulière 1974: 68–69.

51 Carton 1891: 442–48: graves are not mentioned here; De Villefosse 1900: 47–48: 'Il a découvert, en outre, sur divers points de l'édifice, des constructions de l'époque

Similarly, a series of graves found in Bulla Regia (fig. 7.2) are difficult to date. This site provides another instance where some parts of wealthy private houses were later used as burial grounds. Cut into the courtyard of the Temple of Apollo in the forum was an isolated tomb probably dating to the fifth century.[52] This tomb could suggest that the arrival of graves in urban space not associated with religious buildings started in the Vandal period. Elsewhere, as demonstrated by Lepelley (1981), public areas survived[53] well into the late fourth to early fifth centuries with few exceptions, as at Uchi Maius.[54]

Tombs appear in several neighbouring houses at Bulla Regia, but are not closely datable. Graves were found in the following structures (fig. 7.2): a portion of Insula no. 1; the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse; and Houses no. 9 and no. 10.[55] Their proximity suggests that this sector of the city became a funerary area (albeit located in former houses) probably some time in Late Antiquity.

This burial zone is not clearly linked to any church, although an unusual mosaic representing the four rivers of paradise found in Maison no. 10 attests to a connection with Christian traditions.[56] Carton recorded a church built into the *frigidarium* of the north-east baths, fairly close to these burials, but this identification is uncertain.[57] In fact, the only religious building securely identified in the urban area is the main double church, located on the opposite side of the city. This church also contained late graves, one of them Arab.[58]

The only evidence for dating the funerary use of this sector comes from the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse, where burials were placed in the

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chrétienne. Un peu partout, sur les marches des divers escaliers, sous les voûtes des vomitoires, et principalement sur la plate-forme antérieure, il a rencontré des tombes de la même période, dont l'examen a fourni des détails intéressants.'

52 Leone 1994.

53 Survival of public buildings is attested principally by inscriptions mentioning the refurbishment or the building of new public complexes.

54 Vismara 1999: 73; Gelichi and Milanese 1998. The forum saw an earlier decay with the insertion of an olive press.

55 Beschaouch et al. 1977: 50, 64, 65 (respectively): 2 tombs in room 12 in the Insula 1; graves in the triclinium of the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse; tombs in the northern part of House no. 9; and one burial in the east sector of House no. 10.

56 Hanoune 1983: 55.

57 The description is very superficial and the building is not visible today: 'Au nord du nymphée a été continué le dégagement d'une église dont le presbyterium et l'extrémité des trois nefs ont été découverts. Au pied du presbyterium sont quatre cavités qui recevaient le pieds du ciborium en bois. Tout à côté de ce monument se trouvent des petits bains d'une parfait conservation le mur ayant encore quatre mètres de hauteur' (Carton 1922: 174).

58 Duval 1969.

*triclinium* of the house. Here the mosaic floor into which the tombs were cut was repaved some time from the second half of the fourth to the fifth centuries, showing the continuity of occupation of the structure at least for part of this century.[59] The structure was probably transformed and the burials inserted in this part of the city some time after the middle of the sixth century C.E.[60]

It is difficult to say whether the presence of burials in this part of the city should be seen as evidence of continuity of use of the quarter for habitation (with burials inserted in some deserted houses) or as the result of its overall abandonment. Certainly, it must be emphasized that the funerary area is located not far from the main road that crosses the city near the main fortified complexes (the fort and fortified theatre).[61] Once again, the placement of these burials seems to suggest the presence of a programmed rather than casual reorganization of the city. The area turned into a cemetery offered two advantages: a free space possibly near inhabited houses and easy access from both the urban and the suburban areas.

## Vandal and Byzantine Urban Graves in Carthage

With a larger quantity of data in comparison to other urban centres, Carthage provides an opportunity for deeper analysis of urban graves in the Vandal period (broadly speaking, the fifth century), the early Byzantine period (referred to here generally as the sixth century), and the late Byzantine period (late sixth to seventh centuries C.E.).[62]

Susan Stevens (1995a) has studied 'intra-mural' burials in Carthage, evaluating the social significance of the phenomenon and trying to identify whether these urban graves resulted from particularly privileged status or if their location was due to the inhabitants' changing perspective on the city. She argued that in some instances urban burials could have been the result of privileged status, as in the case of the circus necropolis (see below), which used some stone cists (and occasionally stone coffins) that were similar in typology to graves usually located in 'privileged' positions in the cemetery churches outside of urban areas. A more recent

59 Beschaouch et al. 1977: 64.

60 Broise and Thébert 1993: 387. This chronology is suggested although no clear explication is provided.

61 Beschaouch et al. 1977: 100–01.

62 The Vandal conquest of Carthage occurred in 439 C.E., and the Byzantine reconquest in 533.

publication has also reconsidered some details of the typology of urban burials.[63]

I present the data in a synthetic manner here, but consider archaeological evidence within a wider perspective of urban changes and funerary customs in different periods. I emphasize the topographical setting of tombs distributed in urban spaces.[64] Although they appear to be randomly distributed inside the city, and secure dating is not always possible, different trends can be identified in different periods.[65] For instance, the phenomenon of groups of graves associated with residential areas, without necessarily being close to a religious building, seems to become more evident in the late sixth and seventh centuries.

### *(a) The Urban Organization of Roman Carthage*

The Roman city of Carthage was founded with a regular plan, characterized by four *centuriae strigatae* (rectangular sets of city blocks).[66] The city was not built up all at once; rather, some parts, including the north-west boundary (fig. 7.3, no. 1a),[67] the north-east boundary (fig. 7.3, no. 1b),[68] and the south-west area of the city, were not occupied until later phases (fig. 7.3, no. 26).[69] The construction of the city wall around 425 C.E. occasioned a change in urban layout, and occupation of peripheral neighbourhoods, whether funerary or residential, was usually directly connected with the alternating abandonment and reuse of the city

63 Problems related to graves located in the suburbs of the city will not be considered in detail here (cf. Leone 2002).

64 As discussed above, Stevens's recent study (1995a) of these burials emphasized also questions of social status.

65 As pointed out by Stevens 1995a; Duval 1997a: 348.

66 Saumagne (1924) suggested that the city, measuring about 300 ha, was characterized by four large centuriae, separated by two main streets (*decumani* and *cardines maximi*). The four centuriae measured about 20×24 *actus* each. For a synthesis of the organization of the regular plan of Carthage, see Wightman 1980.

67 Centuria A (on the north-west of the city) was never entirely occupied, but a part of it was connected with the rural subdivision (as shown by the Italian excavation at Teurf el Sour: Carandini et al. 1983: 14–15). Gros and Torelli (1988: 287) instead suggest that the area was simply never included in the project of building activity inside the urban area.

68 Archaeological analysis in the north-east edge (centuria B, Neuru 1992: 139–40) has shown that the city, at least during the 1st–2nd centuries C.E., had its edge about 50 m south of the hypothetical network proposed by Saumagne.

69 Hurst and Roskams 1984: 27. 'In the south west the "villa" at Byr es Zehya on the rural alignments showed that centuria C was incomplete.' They also showed that the streets were paved with a central drain in the 2nd century C.E. or later.

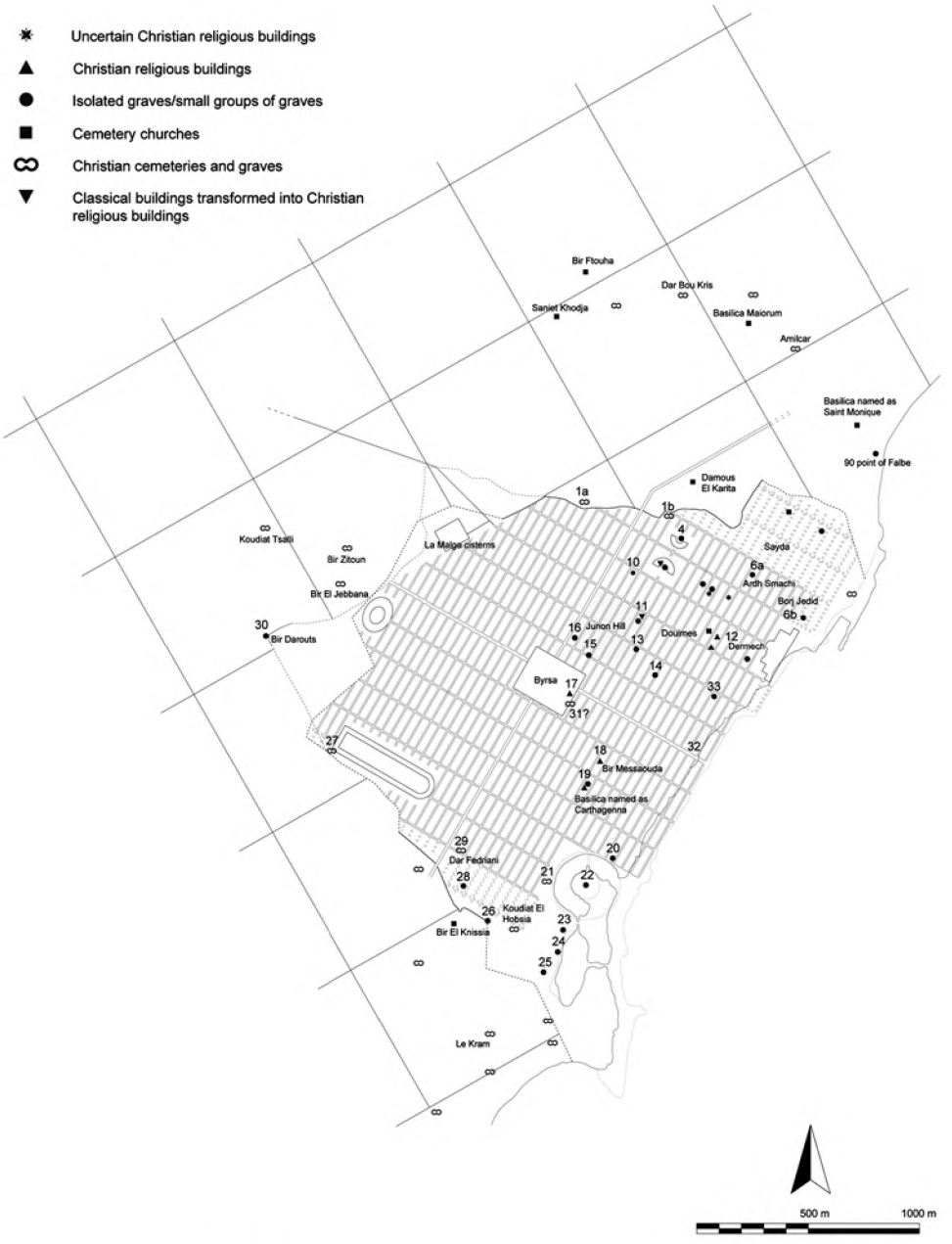


Figure 7.3 Plan of Carthage showing graves, cemeteries, and Christian buildings

walls.[70] Figure 7.3 shows the city as it existed in its classical Roman plan with the insertion of Christian buildings, isolated graves, and small groups of graves. This map places the graves within the urban grid, with the aim of showing (where existing) the correspondence between religious complexes and tombs.[71] Two lines of the city walls are presented showing the traditional reconstruction[72] and a new one resulting from excavations near the amphitheatre.[73] It is important to remember that the city wall was probably not viewed as a barrier in Late Antiquity, as discussed above.

Let us consider the archaeological data for isolated graves in the urban area in chronological order and topographically, moving from north to south, in order to see better the development of different quarters over time (cf. table 7.1, pp. 191–95 below). To emphasize the chronological difficulties in this research, poorly dated burials are listed first and problems in identifying dates are indicated. After the presentation of data, broad chronological patterns over the city will be discussed and contextualized with the evidence from other case studies.

### *(b) Poorly Dated Urban Graves*

In the northern part of the city, two entertainment buildings, the theatre and the odeon, were transformed and reused with graves set into them (fig. 7.3, no. 4–5). Dating the odeon's phases is difficult. Graves (possibly Vandal) were dug into it after it went out of use. Later it was used as a dump by the people living nearby, and in the seventh century was intensively inhabited.[74] It can then be suggested (though only hypothetically) that the graves were inserted into the building immediately after its abandonment.

Arab graves were also found in the vicinity of the odeon,[75] suggesting funerary use for a long time, perhaps from the Byzantine to the Arab

70 For a general synthesis on the city wall, see Wells 1980; Hurst and Roskams 1984: 30–36. The course of the city wall is not fully known. On problems in identifying its position in the northern part of the city, see Duval 1997b: 349. On the extension of the city wall on the north of Borj Jedid, near the coast, see Duval and Lézine 1959a; Duval 1972: 1099. See in general Hurst 1993: 330; Stevens 1996.

71 The location of cemeteries, graves, and religious buildings outside of the city walls is based on new data combined with plans published in Lantier 1922; Hurst and Roskams 1984; Ennabli 1997; and Stevens 1995a.

72 Hurst and Roskams 1984: 30–36; Hurst 1993.

73 Recent excavations near the amphitheatre in the Bir Darouts area have revealed some fragments of the city wall, suggesting a new path, closer to the amphitheatre, different from the one that has been proposed in the past: Evans 1999.

74 Ellis 1980: 34.

75 Vitelli 1981: 6; Leone 2002: 240 nn. 34–35.

period. Burials were also found in the cryptoporticus connecting these two entertainment buildings.[76] Tombs were placed in the *scaena* and orchestra of the theatre, possibly in the Byzantine period.[77] Although this placement appears random, the graves in the Byzantine period might have been associated with a religious site, an *oratorium* (place for prayers).[78]

The changing function of the building illustrates a trend of redesigning the traditional meeting places of the Roman period.[79] In many cases, if not occupied by houses in the Vandal period, these were empty spaces in the urban network by Byzantine times, and they were easily connected and reachable from different parts of the city.[80] In the same area of the city, other graves were found around the circular complex and its associated building, interpreted as a church. Recently these graves (stone cists) have been re-dated to the Islamic period, possibly post–eighth century C.E. (fig. 7.3, no.10).[81]

On the Byrsa hill, it has been proposed that the classical basilica (fig. 7.3, no.17) was transformed into a religious complex (Ennabli 1997; Duval 1997a; Stevens 1995a: 213; Leone 2002)[82] and an underground chapel built on the north-east side of the hill.[83] It has been suggested that there was also a cemetery associated with the religious buildings, as numerous Christian

76 Stevens 1995a: 212; Leone 2002: 240.

77 Graves are dated to the sixth to seventh centuries or later (Stevens 1995a: 212; Leone 2002: 240; Ennabli 1997: 8).

78 For the description of the oratorium see Gauckler 1907: 457; G.-C. Picard and Baillon 1990: 11–27.

79 The circus and the amphitheatre probably continued in use during part of the Byzantine period, while the theatre and the odeon were certainly abandoned after the Vandal conquest.

80 On the fate of spectacle buildings in the fourth century and the Vandal and Byzantine periods see Hugoniot 1996: 258–75.

81 The circular building has been interpreted as a religious complex identifiable as an oriental *memoria* (a religious complex connected with a martyr's cult), but this idea is disputed (Senay 1992). The associated building, previously identified as a Christian basilica, has been now reinterpreted as an Islamic complex, built in the eighth century. Graves (previously dated to the seventh century) located in this building were dug after its abandonment (Caron and Lavoie 2002). If these graves are dated to the early Islamic period, they might be associated with the ones found near the odeon (Vitelli 1981: 6). See also Leone 2002: 240.

82 The identification is uncertain. The building has been identified with the Mandracium, a fortified monastery mentioned by Procopius (*De Aed.* 6.5.11; *De Bellis* 4.26.17). However, its location does not entirely correspond, since it is described as 'near the coast' (Gros 1985: 125).

83 Duval 1972: 1122. Another chapel dedicated to the Theotokos was built in the proconsular palace, as attested by Procopius (*De Aed.* 6.5).

inscriptions coming from this area have been recorded (fig. 7.3, no. 31).[84] However, we do not have any further evidence of graves, and marble funerary slabs might have been reused here.

On the east side of the hill only a few areas have been excavated. Three graves have been found here: two (one adult and a child) in the *cardo* XVII east (fig. 7.3, no. 33)[85] and another burial in the cardo IX east (fig. 7.3, no. 14).[86] Graves found in the Magon quarter along the coast could be Byzantine or Arab (fig. 7.3, no. 32).[87]

### *(c) Vandal and Byzantine Graves*

The area of Sayda in the northern suburb of the city, near the coast, was probably just inside the city wall.[88] An underground baptistery and tombs were found here (fig. 7.3, no. 2–3). In this sector there were wealthy graves, such as the chapel decorated with rich mosaics where the clergyman Asterius was buried.[89]

In the northern part of the city, to the east of the theatre, graves of the seventh century were found between cardines IX and X east and *decumani* V and VI north inside a wealthy house, perhaps abandoned in this period (fig. 7.3, no. 9).[90] Nearby, in the area between cardines X and XI east and decumani IV and V north, close to the Maison de Tellus, a building identified as a religious complex and other graves dated to the seventh century were uncovered (fig. 7.3, no. 8).[91] This evidence seems to suggest the creation of

84 Ennabli 1991: 196–208 (from the Beulé's apses) and 209–17 (on the hill). See also Stevens 1995a: 213; Leone 2002: 243 n. 54. An early Christian deposit was also found on the Byrsa hill.

85 Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002: 243.

86 Found in a trench in rue Saint Augustin: Ellis 1988; Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002: 214.

87 Rakob 1979: 29. In the fourth century an apsed building was erected in the area. It may have had a religious function in the Byzantine period.

88 See Duval and Lézine 1959.

89 Asterius is mentioned in a fragmentary inscription, that has been joined with one reading 'Arcarius' or 'Archidaconus' (Ennabli 1997; Duval 1997a). The monument has been dismantled, removed, and rebuilt in the area of Dermech behind the Antonine baths, where it is still visible. Leone 2002: 239 n. 26.

90 Balmelle et al. 1995: 437. Four stone cists were excavated here. These have been dated to the end of the seventh century when the house was abandoned (Stevens 1995a: 213 n. 35; Leone 2002: 241).

91 For the identification as a monastery, see Ennabli 2000: 89–98; contra, see Duval 2000: 330–32. For an analysis of the monument and its interpretation, see Duval 2000: 386–91. Duval (390) points out uncertainties in the identification of this building as the

a new funerary area between the theatre and the Dermech area some time in the Byzantine period. Three or possibly four churches were also located in this sector just behind the Antonine baths (fig. 7.3, no. 12).[92] Numerous tombs were placed around the main church (Dermech I) built between the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth century C.E., but there were none inside it. To the north of this area, in Ard Smachi (fig. 7.3, no. 6a) and Borj Jedid (fig. 7.3, no. 6b), late Byzantine graves placed into wealthy residences were found.[93] The latter burial sector and the one in Dermech were probably a single large cemetery in use in the Byzantine period.[94]

Several burials were found on the hill of Juno, near the house of the mosaic of the Dominus Julius (fig. 7.3, no. 13)[95] and on the south-west of the Maison de la Chasse au Sanglier. These burials probably date to the Byzantine period[96] and relate to a Byzantine religious complex built into the substructures of a building adjoining the Maison de la Chasse au Sanglier, which may have had a public function (fig. 7.3, no. 11).[97] An association between this religious structure and graves is suggested by the

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monastery of Bigua (Ennabli 2000), and proposes that the complex should be described as 'le monument à auges du quartier des villas.' 'Monuments à auges' are buildings, often religious, with a double line of basins inside. Their function has been often debated: Duval and Duval 1972; Duval and Golvin 1972; Duval 1976, 1979; Nestori 1980–82. Some graves were inserted into one of these structures in the second half of the seventh century C.E. (Duval 1997a: 334; Ennabli 2000: 124). A probable religious building was noted in the area (near the Maison de Tellus, located between cardines X and XI east and decumani IV and V north) during demolition in 1957, but was destroyed without any recording (Ennabli 1997: 77; Duval 1997a: 331). The monastery of St Stephen has been identified (Ennabli 1997: 76) between the cardines XII and XIII east and decumani IV and V north (about 120 m south-east of the cistern of Bordj Djedid).

92 For a synthesis, see Duval 1972: 1078–98; Ennabli 1997. One of the churches was probably entirely destroyed and a second partially demolished in order to reach the Punic necropolis below (see Duval 1972: 1078–98). See also Stevens 1995a: 210 and Leone 2002: 242.

93 Ard es Smachi: Lantier 1922: 23 n. 6, no. 26; Stevens 1995a: 210; Ennabli 1997: 102; Leone 2002: 241. On Borj Jedid see Lantier 1922: no. 27; Leone 2002: 241. Christian graves are also recorded in the drainage system in connection with the large cisterns of Borj Jedid (Vitelli 1981: 5). A possible religious building (identified as a baptistery) was found in this area (see Vaultrin 1932: 209 n. 4; Stevens 1995a: 210). Burials found in the area are also recorded in Lantier 1922: no. 22 (fig. 7.3, 15).

94 Duval 1997a: 334.

95 Lantier 1922: 27; Stevens 1995a: 242; Leone 2002: 242.

96 Information on the hill of Juno comes principally from the geophysical survey carried out by the Polish team (Iciek et al. 1974). Other burials found in the area are recorded in Lantier 1922: no. 20 (fig. 7.3, 15) and Leone 2002: 242.

97 Lantier 1922: 27; Ennabli 1997: 88; Leone 2002: 242. The large public building built on top of the substructures may have been a bath complex.

presence of burials in the south-east part of the domus[98] Undated Christian inscriptions were also found on the hill of Juno.[99]

Moving to the south, a single tomb dated to the Vandal period was found in one of the rooms of an ecclesiastical complex annexed to the Basilica of Carthagenna.[100] This structure has been interpreted in the past as an urban church, built in the fourth century and then destroyed and abandoned during the Vandal period, although this identification has been recently reconsidered (fig. 7.3, no. 19).[101] The building in its first phase does not appear able to accommodate a large congregation, and it hardly seems suitable for use as a church. Only later in the Byzantine period was it rebuilt as a monumental religious complex. Another church with a baptistery, dated to the Byzantine period, existed nearby at Bir Messaouda (fig. 7.3, no. 18).[102]

Graves appear almost everywhere in the area around the harbour. Beside the rectangular harbour, five Vandal or Byzantine graves were excavated (fig. 7.3, no. 23).[103] Burials dated to the Vandal period were also found in the middle of the circular harbour of the city (fig. 7.3, no. 22).[104] This island was restored in the Byzantine period, but tombs appeared again in the seventh century.[105] Stone cist burials of the seventh century were found in the northern part of the circular harbour (fig. 7.3, no. 20),[106]

98 Lantier 1931: 502; 1922: 27. Eight burials were found recently on the hill of Juno (fig. 7.3, 16), close to the Hannibal station of the TGM (Stevens 1995a: 213 n. 40; Leone 2002: 242).

99 Saumagne (1930–31: 654) does not provide precise descriptions of the graves. Inscribed marble slabs might have been reused here. See also Leone 2002: 242 n. 51.

100 Stevens 1995a: 211 n. 20; Humphrey 1980: 115. It was probably the grave of a child, covered with mortar and located in a courtyard. See also Leone 2002: 244.

101 Ennabli 2000: 38. The earliest phase of the structure has been dated to the first half of the 4th century. It was then partially enlarged at the beginning of the 5th century before the Vandal invasion. Duval has disputed its identification in the first phase as a church (1997a; 2000: 388).

102 On the baptistery, McCulloch 1996; on the church, Miles 1999: 44. See also http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/everyone/carthage.

103 Stevens 1995a: 212 considers these graves Vandalic; Ennabli (1997: 10 n. 17) instead suggests a date in the Byzantine period. See also Leone 2002: 244.

104 Burials were in simple pits. Dated to the second half of the 5th century, they were found in the north-east side of the island (Hurst 1979: 38; Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002: 244).

105 Hurst 1979: 41, 44. Graves were principally located in the north-east sector of the harbour. Merlin (1909: 52) found other graves in the south-east part of the island. The latter appear more difficult to date. See also Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002: 244.

106 Hurst 1994: 310; Stevens 1995a: 211. Ennabli (1997: fig. 1) reports further burials in this area of the harbour (in fig. 7.3, 21). See also Leone 2002: 244.

in the vaulted store along the rectangular harbour (fig. 7.3, no. 24),[107] in the tophet (fig. 7.3, no. 25),[108] and on the south of the decumanus VI south (fig. 7.3, no. 29).[109] These graves were often near industrial structures. Craft complexes were associated with living quarters, suggesting household production oriented towards self-sufficiency. The evidence at the harbour shows a trend starting in the late Byzantine period of favouring burial close to a living area rather than to a church. In the area of Koudiat el Hobsia, the presence of a monastery and a cemetery has been suggested.[110]

Finally, a cemetery in the southern part of the circus was likewise associated with a former public building.[111] It has no evident association with a religious complex,[112] but no large-scale excavation took place in that area and the existence of a church somewhere in the surroundings cannot be excluded.

### *(e) Graves in Urban Spaces in Carthage: An Ordered Evolution?*

Carthage permits closer analysis of urban graves than do other North African cities. Graves dated to the Vandal period have been found in totally abandoned areas, such as the island in the middle of the circular harbour, or in the northern (fig. 7.3, no. 1a) and southern sectors of the city (fig. 7.3, no. 26) discussed above. It must be pointed out that in all known cases graves dated to this period are characterized by simple pits, often only shallowly excavated. Their reduced number within the city does not indicate the existence of organized funerary areas, but rather that these

107 Stager 1978: 153–61 (no description of graves); Humphrey 1980: 99; Leone 2002: 244.

108 Poinssot and Lantier 1923. For graves in the tophet, dated to the 3rd century on the assumption that the sector was abandoned after the earthquake, see C. Picard 1951: 27. Other graves, without goods and probably late, are mentioned by Merlin (1943–45: 457).

109 Annabi (1978: 19) refers to a trench excavated in the Ghali's property. See also Leone 2002: 244.

110 A second funerary area named Koudiat el Hobsia was probably located in this part of the city (Hurst 1999: 84–90). The area is now completely destroyed, but descriptions attest to the presence of Christian burials. Some funerary inscriptions were recorded. An isolated amphora burial of the 6th or 7th centuries C.E. was found on the north side of decumanus during rescue excavation in rue Saint Augustin (Ellis 1988) (fig. 7.3, 14). See also Leone 2002: 243.

111 Humphrey 1988: 325–27.

112 Stevens 1995a; Ellis 1988: 91; Humphrey 1980. Another single grave appeared in the recent excavation in proximity to the city wall, in the area known as Bir Darouts, but no dating evidence is provided (Evans 1999: 28).

burials were inserted into abandoned and available spaces inside the urban area.[113] Other organized necropoleis must have existed, and probably some of the cemetery basilicas that surrounded the cities were still in use. However, data are currently too scanty to formulate specific hypotheses. It appears that fifth-century graves were often placed in completely abandoned areas and that the reuse of former public buildings as cemeteries occurs for the first time in this period (as at Bulla Regia).

At Carthage, unlike other North African cities, the presence of graves inside urban churches has never been recorded. Little is known about the typology of tombs dated to sixth century. They were mainly excavated between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries without recording. Many burials from this period are known only from inscriptions.[114] Still, after the Byzantine reconquest, urban planning probably determined the location of burial in sectors of the city associated with religious complexes. The evidence suggests that, from 533 until at least the end of the sixth century C.E., urban burials at Carthage were mainly placed in proximity to religious complexes. This was the case for the graves in the Dermech area (fig. 7.3, no. 12), the oratoria located on the hill of Juno (fig. 7.3, no. 11, 13) and the theatre (fig. 7.3, no. 5).[115] These appear to be clustered around religious complexes.

Between the end of the sixth and the seventh centuries, a more random distribution of graves seems to have appeared. Some tombs were situated in connection with living areas, not always in association with religious complexes but certainly closely related to the life of the inhabitants and their prayers. It is not only in the funerary sphere that transformations in the urban panorama are recorded in this period.[116] In all the excavated areas a progressive trend to reduce spaces with the building of small walls

113 Another Vandal burial area with similar types of graves was found in the northern suburb of the city, in the area known as 'the 90 point of Falbe.' In this area graves are communal, and for this reason it has been suggested that those people were victims of a plague. One grave had coarseware and cooking vessels (Dietz and Trolle 1979; Poulsen 1986; Stevens 1995b).

114 Inscriptions found in cemeteries both inside and outside of the urban area have been published by Ennabli (1975, 1982, 1991).

115 There is very little reliable dating evidence from this area. Despite the fact that there were numerous graves in the area between the theatre and the odeon, and that these are variously dated, burials found in the theatre have been considered to belong to the Byzantine period. It is possible that, as in Hadrumetum, this sector maintained a funerary use for a long period.

116 On the substantial differences between seventh-century Byzantine towns and those of the classical and the early Byzantine periods, see Brandes and Haldon 2000.

is evident. This is so, for instance, at the productive centre on the northern side of the circular harbour (fig. 7.3, n. 20), which was abandoned probably after 660 C.E.[117] and in the north-west of the city.[118] In general, the increasing appearance of small production centres in connection with the inhabited sectors (and burials) seems to be evident.

At the same time, however, Carthage seems to have had controlled and organized burial areas, not always related to churches, as has been suggested for Rome, where a cemetery placed close to a road passing through the former amphitheatre has been identified.[119] At Carthage an attempt at the control and maintenance of urban spaces is attested by the restoration of the drainage system in the streets, which were repaved during the late sixth century and probably again in the seventh century C.E.[120] Here, another example of the survival of urban organization is provided by the well-organized cemetery placed in a corner of the circus and used mainly in the first half of the seventh century C.E. (fig. 7.3, no. 27). In this case, the presence of an orderly late Byzantine burial areas suggests that there was a programmed and organized transformation of the city as well as a more random distribution of small groups of graves in connection with inhabited areas.

The placement of a cemetery in the circus, however, does not permit us to identify a general trend of reusing entertainment buildings for funerary functions. Some other examples are known, but those cases are difficult to date and may be Arab burials. At Thugga medieval pottery was found during the excavation of the scaenae of the theatre, as well as late structures and graves.[121] Similarly at Thuburbo Majus, burials were found on the south-west side of the amphitheatre.[122]

Entertainment buildings met various ends, being transformed into houses or fortifications. A common element is identifiable when one looks at the location of cemeteries placed within these structures. Entertainment buildings were often located on the periphery of cities. Likewise, houses where graves were found were usually located at the margins of

117 Hurst 1994.

118 Humphrey 1980: 103–06.

119 Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 1993.

120 Cardo III east was restored in the second half of the sixth century (Humphrey 1980: 104, 106) and cardo XIV was entirely rebuilt in the sixth century (ibid.: 108). A part of a street entirely constructed from re-used blocks was recorded in the southern part of the city, near the *cardo finitimus* (Saumagne 1930–31: 657). It is not possible to date this structure.

121 Carton 1891; Villefosse 1900: 47.

122 These are also undated; Chatelain 1946/49: 680.

urban areas, suggesting the intention to cluster burials in abandoned buildings close to the inhabited sectors. Concerning the placement of graves in former imposing houses or ex-public complexes, where they often cut through elaborate mosaics and floors, future work must investigate more carefully the idea proposed by Stevens (1995a) that these urban burials, so carefully built, were perhaps considered as 'privileged.' In any case, their method of construction appears to be the result of a planned and organized process. Therefore, archaeological data suggest that there was programmed deconstruction and reuse of parts of the city where abandoned areas existed.[123]

The *spolia* used in the construction of graves further suggest that there was an organized redistribution of building elements. Although previously used, these materials may have been sold to meet the needs of buyers. In this sense entertainment buildings, abandoned because the ideology connected to their use slowly disappeared, were often transformed into quarries.[124] A similar fate can be suggested also for the Carthage circus. Apart from three amphora burials, all the tombs in the cemetery are stone cists, sometimes with a stone sarcophagus as well.[125] All the slabs in the graves are spolia removed from earlier structures. Nearly all the blocks were simple, unworked slabs, except in one case where a fragment of a frame was inserted into a grave wall.[126] This evidence could suggest that there was systematic reuse of building materials, especially considering that an entire section of the circus was dismantled. As removing large blocks must have required the use of some specific machinery, it can be argued that the city government or someone acting on its behalf could have controlled this process. A similar trend can be identified for the theatre, also partially dismantled and reused as a cemetery.[127] The case of Sabratha, where one of the capitals of the theatre was reused in the building of a Byzantine Christian basilica, is

123 For a general analysis of the circulation of marbles see Saradi Mendelovici 1990: 51. For a collection of some laws related to the destiny of the public properties see Cantino Wataghin 1999.

124 Del Moro 1998. Some were fortified instead. In North Africa circuses seem to have had a longer life than theatres. In some cases they were abandoned and then inhabited, as in the case of the theatre of Lepcis Magna (Munzi et al. 2003: 549–50) in the fifth century. The amphitheatre was instead probably fortified (Mattingly 1995: 183). At Bulla Regia, the theatre was transformed into a fortification (Beschaouch et al. 1977).

125 Three tombs had sarcophagi: Humphrey 1988: 327, 333. Duval (1995) shows that stone cists were the most common type of grave in the churches, where presumably the building and purchase of the tomb was controlled.

126 Humphrey 1988: 330.

127 There are no descriptions of the types of graves found in the structure.

also noteworthy.[128] Further analysis of legal sources may contribute to the understanding of the evolution of public properties in the Byzantine period.

Moreover, in the seventh century, as mentioned above, there were also areas of habitation and industry with graves nearby, as seen in the circular harbour and the sector around it. It is important to note that here too the graves were stone cists, suggesting again that their construction was organized and they might have been excavated by professional *fossores*. As at the circus, these burials do not seem to have a direct connection with churches or oratoria. Although this evidence could be related to the lack of extensive excavation in this sector (and therefore the presence of a church nearby cannot be ruled out), the explanation for graves associated with residential areas lies in the significance of the relationship between the dead and the living in contemporary Christian practice. Ease of communication between graves and inhabited areas appears to have been important. In the Christian tradition, proximity of graves and religious buildings was necessary, and tombs located inside churches or near the martyrs' cult areas were privileged. In the late Byzantine period behaviour partially changed, perhaps because of increasing poverty. The phenomenon of burial in urban spaces clearly corresponded to a transformation in the organization of the city. The transformation was not quick and obvious, but slow.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the number of urban graves is still low in comparison with the extra-urban cemetery basilicas, which continued to be in use at least until the seventh century. To the north of Carthage, several extra-urban cemeteries are known at Dar Bou Kris, Bir Ftouha, and other locations[129] along the Tunis-La Marsa highway between Koudiat Zateur and Sidi Bou Said.[130] The southern outskirts are also characterized by the presence of several funerary areas distributed between Le Kram and Douar ech Chott.[131] Seventh-century tombs were found around the church at Bir El Knissia[132] attesting to continuity in burying people

128 Kenrick 1986: 226. Saradi-Mendolovici (1990) discusses the appearance of buildings composed of different types of capitals and the high value placed on them in Byzantine sources.

129 Christian cemeteries were distributed over a large area in the northern part of the city. In particular, Koudiat Zateur is dated to the Vandal period, and Saniet Khodja and Dar Bou Kris both to the Byzantine period (Ennabli 1997: 102).

130 Lantier 1922: 25.

131 Ennabli 1997: 114.

132 The church was particularly important in the sixth to seventh centuries, as it has been suggested that the relics of Felicitas and Perpetua were transferred here from the Basilica Maiorum in the north part of the city (Stevens 1993: 305–07).

in proximity to and inside churches. Further cemeteries existed on the west side of the city, including former pagan necropoleis transformed into Christian ones.[133]

## Conclusions

In North Africa, despite the scarcity of evidence, it is possible to suggest an evolution of burial practices in urban spaces, which in turn determined a change in the fundamental design of Roman cities. In the fourth century, tombs began to appear in abandoned private structures, but they were always associated with necropoleis and located in peripheral areas, as at Thysdrus. In Bulla Regia, one urban grave is recorded in the Vandal period, and it is difficult to discern trends. In the Byzantine period, one may detect an organizational pattern, with burials located in a well-connected area along the main road crossing Bulla Regia (although chronologies for these burials are not based on secure data). The limited evidence does not provide a clear picture. In both cities, it seems possible to identify the reuse of former buildings already located in the urban network and placed in well-connected but peripheral areas of the city.

In Carthage, usage varies through time. Urban graves of the fifth century appear in abandoned areas, but in locations easily reachable from all over the city. They were close to residential neighbourhoods, though not in the centre of the living area. In the early Byzantine period, urban graves were concentrated around urban churches or other religious structures such as oratoria. A trend of redesigning the traditional meeting places of the Roman period can be detected. Isolated groups of urban burials, often not clearly connected with religious buildings, seem to be more apparent in Carthage in the late sixth and seventh centuries. Most of these tombs have no evident association with a religious complex; rather, they are situated near residential areas to facilitate communication between the living and the dead.

Thus, it is possible to distinguish three different types of burials in urban funerary areas: tombs close to churches; groups of burials occupying abandoned (or partially abandoned) public or private structures; and occasional small, isolated groups of private graves located close to living areas.[134] It appears that graves were not placed randomly, but their location was usually determined by special needs and topographical necessities, as

133 Bir es Zitoun and Bir el Jebbana; Ennabli 1997: 114.

134 Stevens 1995a.

in the reuse of entertainment buildings. This is understandable given that late-antique urban landscapes did not result from the ad hoc and uncontrolled occupation of former buildings. Instead, they reflected the needs of a society obliged to live inside an existing texture, not created especially for it, but able to be re-adapted and transformed.

Table 7.1 Christian buildings, associated graves, isolated graves, and small groups of graves in Carthage

| No. | Type of building/graves | Date | Nearby Christian religious building | Principal bibliography |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | Teurf El Sour – cemetery | 7th c. C.E. | None | Carandini et al. 1983: 15; Stevens 1995a: 214; Leone 2002: 239 |
| 1b | Canadian excavation | 7th c. C.E. | None | Humphrey 1980: 103–06; Garrison 1993: 15–19; Garrison et al. 1993: 251–60; Stevens 1995a: 213 n. 36; Leone 2002: 239 n. 25 |
| 2 | Underground baptistery | Late 4th or early 5th c. C.E. / Byzantine period | Probably annexed to a church | Duval and Lézine 1959b; Y. Duval 1982: 682; Duval 1989 |
| 3 | Asterius's Chapel | 7th c. C.E. | Underground baptistery, and probably a church | Duval and Lézine 1959a; Duval and Lézine 1959b; Duval 1972; Stevens 1995a |
| 4 | Odeon – graves | Vandal? or later | Oratorium (?) in the theatre and circular monument | Gauckler 1907: 457; Ellis 1980: 34; Stevens 1995a: 212; Leone 2002: 240 |
| 5 | Theatre – graves and possible religious building | Oratorium (?) – 6th c. (?)<br>Graves – Byzantine | Oratorium (?) and circular monument | Picard and Baillon 1992: 13; Stevens 1995a: 212; Leone 2002: 240 |
| 6a | Christian graves – Ard es Smachi | Byzantine | Douimes area with several basilicas | Ferron and Pinard 1951: 97 pl. 1; Lantier 1922: 23, no. 6; Ennabli 1997: 102; Stevens 1995a: 210; Leone 2002: 241 n. 45. |
| 6b | Christian graves – Borj Jedid | Byzantine | Douimes area with several basilicas (possible baptistery in the area: Vaultrin 1930: 209 n. 4) | Lantier 1922, no. 27; Vitelli 1981: 5; Stevens 1995a: 210; Leone 2002: 241 n. 44 |

| No. | Type of building/graves | Date | Nearby Christian religious building | Principal bibliography |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Building identified by Gauckler as monastery of St Stephan | Byzantine (?) | | Gauckler 1907: 410–20; Ennabli 1997: 76, fig. 30, and 2000: contra Duval 2000: 390; Leone 2002: 241 n. 40 |
| 8 | K IX–X east / D V–VI nord north = probably religious building with graves | Building – Byzantine<br><br>Graves – 7th c. C.E. | Religious building in this complex (in the villa quarter) | Duval 1997: 334, 2000: 390; Ennabli 1997, 2000: 124 |
| 9 | *Insula* between K IX and X east and D V and VI (near the Maison de Tellus) – graves | Not before the 7th c C.E. | Religious building probably recorded at no. 8 | Balmelle et al. 1995: 437; Stevens 1995a: 213 n. 35; Leone 2002: 241 n. 39 |
| 10 | Circular building and adjoining religious building (?) | First half of the 4th c C.E.<br><br>Graves – Arab | | For a general bibliography see Senay 1992; Caron and Lavoie 2002; Leone 2002: 240 n. 34. For the Arab graves: Vitelli 1981: 6 |
| 11 | *Insula* between K V and VI west and D III north – Maison de la Chasse aux Sanglier – Religious building (?) and graves | Religious building – Byzantine<br><br>Graves – 7th c. C.E. (?) | Oratorium in the complex | Lantier 1921: 92, 1922: 27, 1931: 502; Stevens 1995a: 213 n. 38; Leone 2002: 242 n. 50 |
| 12 | Cemetery basilica (Dermech I) and other religious buildings | Dermech I – late 4th–5th c. C.E. / Byzantine | | Duval 1997; Ennabli 1997; Ben Abed – Ben Khader et al. 1999; Ennabli 2000 |
| 13 | Maison du mosaïque du Dominus Iulius | Byzantine | Religious building close to Maison de la Chasse aux Sanglier (11) | Lantier 1922: 27 no. 20; Ennabli 1997: 88; Stevens 1995a: 213; Leone 2002: 242 n. 49 |

| No. | Type of building/graves | Date | Nearby Christian religious building | Principal bibliography |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Sondage in Rue Saint Augustin – amphora grave on the north side of the D II north | 7th c. C.E. | None – the closest is the area of Douimes | Ellis 1988; Stevens 1995a: 211 n. 40; Leone 2002: 243 n. 58 |
| 15 | Christian graves | Byzantine | Religious building close to Maison du Dominus Iulius (13) / de la Chasse aux Sanglier (11) | Lantier 1922, no. 20; Leone 2002: 242 n. 49 |
| 16 | Christian graves; Hannibal Station TGM | | Religious building close to Maison de la Chasse aux Sanglier (11) | (Christian epitaph mentioned by Saumagne 1930–31: 654); Stevens 1995a: 213; Leone 2002: 242 n. 51 |
| 17 | Religious building (?) on the Byrsa hill | Byzantine | | Gros 1985: 20–21, 38–44, 113–26; Ennabli 1997 |
| 18 | Baptistery – Bir Messaouda | 6th c. C.E. | | McCulloch 1996; Miles 1999: 44 |
| 19 | So-called Basilica of Carthagenna – grave | Basilica 4th (?)–7th c. C.E.<br>Grave – Vandal | | Humphrey 1980: 115; Stevens 1995a: 212; Leone 2002: 243 n. 61 |
| 20 | Northern sector of the circular harbour – graves | 7th c. C.E. | None – located not far from so-called Basilica of Carthagenna and Koudiat el Hobsia | Hurst 1994: 310; Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002: 244 n. 66 |
| 21 | Christian grave north-west of the circular harbour | | So-called Basilica of Carthagenna | Ennabli 1997, fig. 1; Leone 2002: 244 n. 66 |
| 22 | Circular harbour – graves | 5th–second half of 7th c. C.E. | None – located not far from so-called Basilica of Carthagenna and Koudiat el Hobsia | Merlin 1909: 52; Hurst 1979: 38, 1994: 114; Humphrey 1980; Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002 nn. 64 and 67 |

| No. | Type of building/graves | Date | Nearby Christian religious building | Principal bibliography |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Graves along the rectangular harbour | 5th c. C.E. or Byzantine | None – located not far from Bir el Knissia and Koudiat el Hobsia | Stevens 1995a: 212; Ennabli 1997: 10 n. 17; Leone 2002: 244 n. 65 |
| 24 | Graves in the vaulted store along the rectangular harbour | 7th c. C.E. | None – not far from Bir el Knissia and Koudiat el Hobsia | Stager 1978: 153–56; Humphrey 1980: 99; Leone 2002: 244 n. 68 |
| 25 | Graves in the tophet | 7th c. C.E.? | Bir el Knissia | Merlin 1943–45: 457; Picard 1951: 27; Poinssot and Lantier 1923; Leone 2002: 244 n. 69 |
| 26 | Salammbo district – graves | 5th–7th c. C.E. | Bir el Knissia | Humphrey 1980: 103–06; Hurst and Roskams 1984: 19 (Vandal), 25 (Byzantine); Stevens 1995a: 213; Leone 2002: 239 n. 24 |
| 27 | Circus cemetery | 7th c. C.E. | None | Ellis and Humphrey 1988; Leone 2002: 245 |
| 28 | Sondage in the Ghali's properties – grave | 6th–7th c. C.E. | Bir El Knissia | Annabi 1978: 19; Leone 2002: 244 |
| 29 | Dar Fedriani – Christian epitaphs and lamps | Christian (no precise date) | Bir El Knissia | Ennabli 1997: 59; Leone 2002: 244 |
| 30 | Grave at Bir Darouts | | None | Evans 1999: 28 (pagan graves also mentioned in Delattre 1893: 175); Leone 2002: 239 |
| 31 | Byrsa Hill – cemetery? | Christian graves | Church on the Byrsa hill | Ennabli 1991 (for the inscriptions); Stevens 1995a: 211 n. 20; Leone 2002: 243 |
| 32 | Magon quarter | Byzantine or Arab | Church in the area? | Rakob 1979: 29, 1995; Leone 2002: 243 |

| No. | Type of building/graves | Date | Nearby Christian religious building | Principal bibliography |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | K XVII east | | | Stevens 1995a: 211; Leone 2002: 243 |

*Note*: The location of cemeteries, graves, and religious buildings outside of the city walls is based on plans published in Lantier 1922, Hurst and Roskams 1984, Stevens 1995, and Ennabli 1997. The general plan of the city with urban and rural grid (fig. 7.3) has been redrawn in Autocad based on Hurst 1993 and incorporating the new hypothesis on city walls published in Evans 1999. Sites in this table are keyed to figure 7.3 through the numbers in the first column.

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# 8

# Peopling the Mortuary Landscape of North Africa: An Overview of the Human Osteological Evidence

*Michael MacKinnon*

If the ultimate purpose in any burial ritual is the interment or disposal of the remains of the deceased person, it should follow that mortuary archaeology would view those remains, that is, the human osteological or forensic record, as an important source of information. Indeed, the body or skeleton itself should be the key to deciphering the context of the burial and to linking the related material record, such as grave goods or mortuary architecture, to the cultural world of the past. Despite the connection between skeletal analysis and reconstructions of ancient lives, however, the available database of human bone evidence from North African contexts is not as abundant as might be hoped. In many instances, the study of the human remains, and not just those from ancient Punic, Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine sites in North Africa, is relegated to a low priority. While it may be the case that living humans and the materials they create provide greater immediate appeal than a skeleton, one should not lose sight of the fact that the human osteological record too is a source of invaluable evidence and its analysis is essential in any holistic interpretation of the ancient inhabitants in this region. This chapter surveys the human osteological evidence for ancient North Africa, tracing the development of the discipline in the early years of large-scale excavation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, through to the systematic recovery of skeletal material and the implementation of bio-anthropological analytical techniques in the late twentieth century. These data will be used to draft a preliminary picture of the ancient population of this period – in essence, then, a picture of the people who in turn created and moulded their mortuary landscape. Attention will focus on the Punic, Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine cultures that inhabited the regions north of the Sahara and west

of Egypt (i.e., roughly the Roman provinces Mauretania, Numidia, Africa Proconsularis, and Cyrenaica; see fig. 8.1).[1]

## Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century

Documented archaeological activity in North Africa first became prevalent in the late nineteenth century. A phenomenal amount of research was conducted from the early 1880s until the late 1920s by Père Delattre, Paul Gauckler, and several other archaeologists, most of whom were working in the area around Carthage, Tunisia. Several Punic, Roman, and Christian cemeteries were excavated, but recovery of skeletal material from these was neither a priority, nor even, in many cases, a concern. Delattre, for example, was especially keen on acquiring inscriptions from his excavations, often to the detriment of all other archaeological materials. He was responsible for the initial excavation of a number of major cemeteries in the Carthage region, including the Cemetery of the Officials, which encompasses the neighbouring Bir el Jebbana and Bir es Zeitoun cemeteries,[2] as well as the Christian cemetery near the La Malga cisterns.[3] All of these cemeteries are located near the amphitheatre at Carthage. Other important cemetery sites under his jurisdiction included Damous el Karita,[4] a Christian cemetery near Sidi Bou Said, Punic tombs from Carthage, as well as the necropolis of Douïmes[5] among other Punic tomb sites,[6] and the Christian cemetery of Meidfa between Carthage and Sidi Bou Said.[7] Delattre's plans of some of these cemeteries, in addition to notes in his articles, suggest that hundreds of tombs were uncovered in total, but no details are provided about the skeletons unearthed. In some instances, notably the Roman pagan burials, cremation was preferred to inhumation, so recovery of complete skeletal remains is unlikely anyhow. Nevertheless, the Christian and Punic inhumations certainly totalled a large number. Forty tombs from the Douïmes cemetery are described, and it is probable that the other cemeteries had sizeable potential skeletal counts as well. Occasionally, Delattre mentions the skeletal material, but only as a sweeping reference and

1 David Mattingly (this volume) considers the osteological data for the Garamantes, but I have not included them here given that these people inhabited Saharan regions beyond the southern boundaries of the Roman empire.
2 Delattre 1882b, 1889.
3 Delattre 1882a, 1883a.
4 Delattre 1883b, 1886.
5 Delattre 1893, 1897a, 1897b, 1897c; 1897d.
6 Delattre 1890.
7 Delattre 1906.

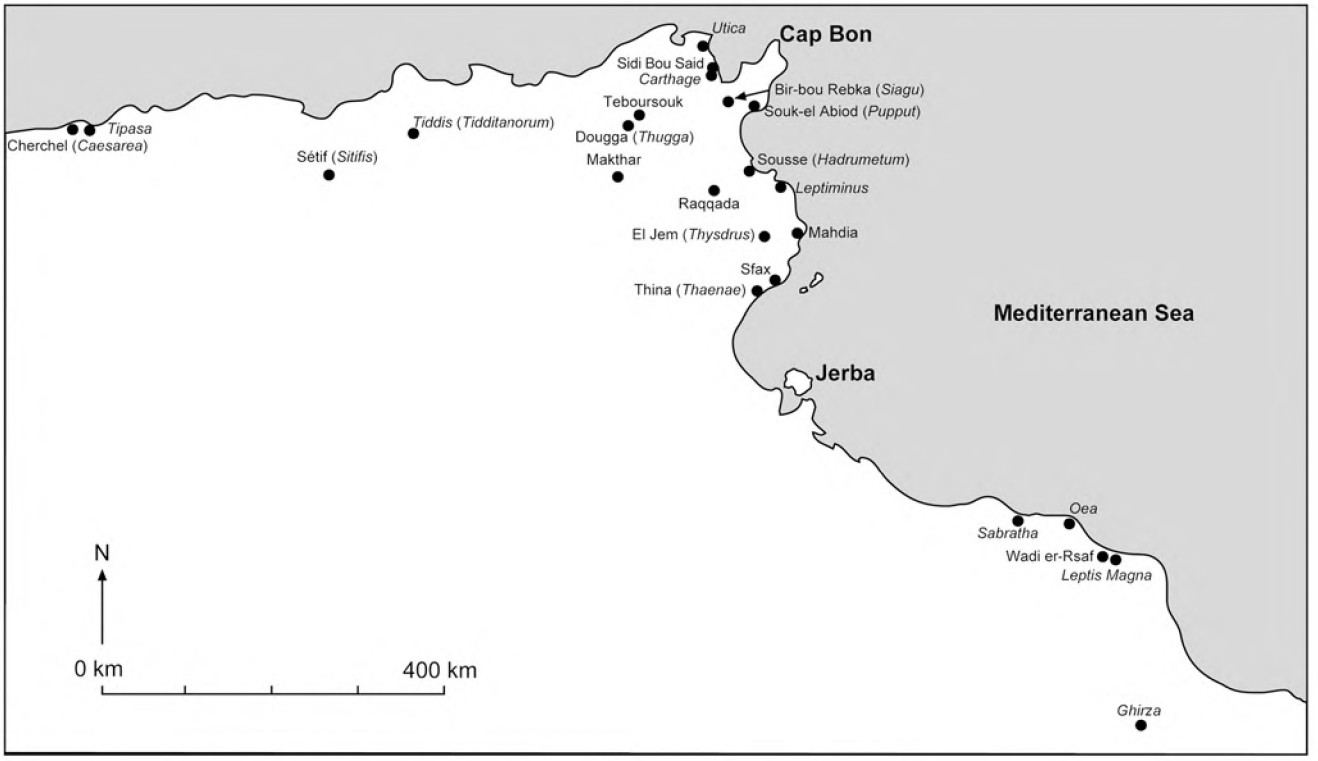


Figure 8.1 Map of North Africa showing major sites discussed in the chapter (J. Gordon)

usually in somewhat anecdotal terms as evidence of ancient populations, or as cremated contents within a special urn or vessel. He does, however, provide one interesting osteological comment about an old man recovered from a marble sarcophagus of Punic date. He states that this individual was dolichocephalic (or dolichocranic, i.e., had a long, narrow head in which the width measures less than 75% of the length), a condition Delattre (1901) considered as the normal head shape of the Carthaginian Punic people. His findings were anticipated by those of Lucien Bertholon (1890), who, a decade earlier, had examined two Punic crania found in Tunisia. Cranial indices had only recently been formulated at this time and were being implemented to distinguish 'races' of humans, so it is not surprising that both Bertholon and Delattre attributed their findings to what they considered a Punic 'race' of people, more akin to the North African Berbers[8] than to European settlers. Their purpose in distinguishing such groups on the basis of cranial indices, however, was more likely related to their adherence to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century notions of colonialism and control,[9] rather than to a concerted effort to characterize and trace population variation on the basis of osteometric data. The fact that these early excavations were directed by either soldiers or clergy certainly influenced the goals and methods associated with each. Both parties sought to establish some measure of control over, and acceptance from, the local population, be this through a more peaceful religious route or a more dominating military angle. The important criterion in their research, however, seemed to be a quick excavation and analysis of a wide area, with attention focused on architecture and artefacts, especially tomb stelae and grave goods. Bone fragments, from cremations or inhumations, were given little consideration.

Other late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century archaeological research in North Africa included additional work in Carthage and at many other cemetery sites, including Sousse (Hadrumetum), Hadjeb el Aioun (Masclianae), Bir-bou-Rebka (Saigu), Souk-el-Abiod (Pupput), Sidi el Hani, Thina (Thaenae), and Sfax.[10] Concerning Carthage, Gauckler's (1895) attention to detail is evident from his reports, so it is unfortunate that the

8 Bertholon and Chantre 1913.

9 There is an increasingly growing body of scholarship that deals with post-colonial perspectives in archaeology. Recent volumes that examine these aspects for the Roman world include Webster and Cooper 1996 and Mattingly 1997.

10 Carthage (Gauckler 1895; Lantier 1922; Kelsey 1926); Sousse (Goetschy 1903; Ordioni and Maillet 1904); Hadjeb el Aioun (Godin 1905); Sidi el Hani (Gridel 1928–29); Bir-bou-Rebka and Souk-el-Abiod (Cassaigne 1909); Thina (Barrier and Benson 1908); Sfax (Vercoutre 1887).

Cemetery of the Officials contained principally cremation burials; otherwise one might have expected some examination of any complete skeletons encountered. He mentions the cremated bone,[11] even diagrams fragments in a cinerary urn, but, like Delattre, his focus is on the urn itself, and not its contents. Reports for the other sites listed above provide scant to virtually no comment on skeletal remains, an unfortunate circumstance especially given that General Goetschy (1903) excavated some 1200 graves at Sousse. Francis Kelsey (1926) offers some general observations about the cremated children's bones found during his tophet excavations in Carthage (see fig. 1.4 above), making reference to the accompanying objects and offerings, such as rings, bracelets, amulets, and apparently sacrificed animals found within some of the funerary urns recovered. He recognizes that further analyses of the osteological material are required, alluding to forthcoming 'laboratory examinations' and 'rigid investigations' of these materials;[12] however, it is unknown if these were conducted. If so, they remain unpublished.

## The 1960s

Skeletal research is extremely scarce after the last few excavations by Delattre, Kelsey, and others in the late 1920s. No detailed reports are currently available from 1929 until the 1960s, no doubt a factor of political and social complications related to the Second World War. The 1960s saw a renewed interest in archaeological excavation, not only in Tunisia, but throughout North Africa. One important cemetery complex excavated at this time was Tipasa, Algeria.[13] This site was the focus of a number of monographs and reports, some of which considered the human remains. Most publications, however, are dominated by descriptions of the artefacts recovered, with little mention of the skeletal material. In one of these, Jean Baradez (1968) discussed a collection of 70 tombs excavated that date from the second century B.C.E. until the end of the first century C.E. Cremations outnumber inhumations in this assemblage, which might account for the lack of osteological data presented if most bones were reduced to charred and calcined fragments, but Baradez was able to note some regularities in the patterns displayed. Adults all seemed to be cremated, with the bulk of these dating from the first century B.C.E. to the

11 Gauckler 1895: 94.

12 Kelsey 1926: 47, 49.

13 See Baradez 1961 and 1968 for the skeletal reports for Tipasa. For the larger publication of the cemetery itself, see Bouchenaki 1975.

first century C.E. Children received different treatment, with one infant, less than two months in age, buried, while other children of a contemporary period (the first century C.E. in this case) were cremated. In another report, Serge Lancel (1968) observed that cremations were the exception among his sample of fourth- to first-century B.C.E. burials analysed from Tipasa. To the east of this collection of burials, in the Roman portion of the cemetery, Lancel (1962–63; 1968) noted a mix of cremations and inhumations, and attempted to establish a chronology for this transition. He provided two photographs of skeletons in his lengthier report on this cemetery, but there is no osteological analysis of these remains and it seems that they are only mentioned because in one case the body interrupts a wall, whereas in the second example the inhumation is among the earliest of those recovered in the Roman part of the cemetery. In his 1970 report, Lancel noted the orientation, head position, and age of several inhumations, but the focus is clearly on the materials found in association with these burials.

Elsewhere in Algeria, similar cemetery excavations were conducted in the 1960s at the site of Cherchel. Philippe Leveau (1976, 1978) published extensive accounts of the inhumations and cremations recovered here, but again the main concentration of these articles is the archaeological and architectural evidence as opposed to any analysis of the skeletal material. Preservation states were noted in a number of cases, with some bodies reported to be in poor condition, but few specific taphonomic details were given. With one exception, the skeletons presented are all examples of supine burials, with the arms either aligned at the sides or with one or both arms placed over the hips, sometimes across the chest. One individual (tomb 40) was in a crouched position on its right side. Simple pit or cist inhumations predominated; however, there were also examples of rudimentary tile tombs as well as more elaborate stone coffins. Body alignment tended to be either north-east to south-west, with the head turned to either the east or west, or perpendicular to this (i.e., north-west/south-east). In the latter cases, however, the head tended to face upwards and was not tilted to one side or another.

The 1960s also saw research at the necropolis of Tiddis (ancient Castellum Tiddantanorum) in Algeria. The report for this site[14] contains detailed descriptions of 22 tombs excavated, but little attention is devoted to any human remains recovered. Cremations predominated; however, two inhumations are documented and photographed. Tomb 12 contained an adult skeleton with its arms folded across its waist and head oriented to the south.

14 Février 1970.

Tomb 14 housed a poorly preserved infant skeleton under a makeshift tile tomb. No other details are given.

A fourth important cemetery site in Algeria excavated in the 1960s is Sétif (ancient Sitifis). Although the actual excavations of the site occurred in 1966 and 1967, the reports on the skeletal materials were not published until the 1980s,[15] a fact that no doubt affected their content. Unlike the reports for Cherchel and Tipasa, those for Sétif contain far greater detail concerning the skeletal material. Orientation and body position are still noted – the bulk of the skeletons lay on their backs, with arms either at their sides or across the body, which itself was generally aligned in an east or south-east direction. The head was normally turned to the east. What sets the Sétif material apart from the others, however, is that for the first time age data were collected (or at least reported) from the skeletal material. Of the 228 inhumations recorded, 38 (16.7%) were fetal or newborn, 50 (21.9%) were under one year of age, with a further 29 (12.7%) between 1 and 4 years of age. Only 46 (20.2%) of the skeletons were adults, older than 20 years of age. These data suggest a fairly high infant and child mortality rate at ancient Sétif, but it is difficult to determine if this reflects the actual demography of the area or if it is a factor of sampling bias or differential burial zones within the cemetery. If, for example, relatively more infants and children were interred in this excavated region as opposed to elsewhere in the cemetery, then most certainly the reconstructed demographic profile would favour infants and children.

In Tunisia, a further cemetery at Raqqada[16] was excavated around the same period (i.e., 1960s) as the mortuary work at Sétif. Here, as at the Algerian cemeteries, both cremations and inhumations were recovered. One of the inhumation burials dates to the first century C.E., several others to the second half of the second century C.E., and by the mid-third century C.E. all of the burials are inhumations. Elsewhere in Tunisia, Marie-Claude Chamla (1975; 1976) reports on a sample of 22 males and 23 females recovered from various Punic and protohistoric archaeological contexts in Carthage, Utica, and Mahdia, which he argues share cranial shape and size affinities with other Punic examples from sites in Tunisia, such as Teboursouk, Dougga (Thugga), and Makthar (Mactaris). Although Chamla recognized that dolichocranic skulls predominate over brachycranic examples, thus perhaps indicating a Berber link to the Punic peoples, the pattern is not as definite as Delattre or Bertholon may have

15 For the skeletal reports, see Guéry 1985 and Février and Guéry 1980. For more details about the general excavations at Sétif, see Guéry 1985.

16 Mahjoubi et al. 1970–73.

argued, given that mesocranic skulls (i.e., those with characteristics intermediate to dolichocranic and brachycranic skulls) constitute the majority of Chamla's skeletal sample.

Even though these Algerian and Tunisian cemetery reports often provide plans of the burials and a catalogue of finds recovered in each, they rarely consider the osteological evidence as a source of demographic or biological data. The orientation of the skeleton is noted in many cases. Leveau (1976) even goes so far as to diagram this schematically,[17] to highlight the regular pattern of north-east/south-west and north-west/south-east burial orientation at Cherchel, while Paul-Albert Février and Roger Guéry (1980) document these data in a table. In many cases, the body position, generally supine or flexed, is mentioned, along with the placement of the arms and the direction of the head, but little is done with these data (aside from tabulating them and making general comparisons with other sites), while the individual bones of the skeleton itself were minimally, if at all, examined. The concentration of the research programs of the 1960s and early 1970s at these North African cemetery sites was on establishing a chronology based on the observed changes in burial orientation and body positioning in the case of inhumations, or upon using the variation in the frequency of cremation burials as opposed to inhumations to determine cultural, religious, and behavioural changes.[18] In this manner, the skeletons themselves were treated more as artefacts to be seriated and dated than as sources of information about the ancient people themselves.

## The 1970s and 1980s: UNESCO campaigns

The UNESCO international archaeological campaign of the 1970s and 1980s to save Carthage was arguably the catalyst that brought human osteological research to the forefront as a vital source of data concerning life and death in ancient North Africa. Italian and American teams were responsible for cemetery excavations at this time – the American teams dug a Byzantine cemetery near the Circus, and Italian teams a Punic necropolis. Isolated burials, however, were encountered at a number of other internationally sponsored sites excavated in the area, most notably in the Danish excavations of a late-antique house (Falbe, site 90).[19] Given the pool of osteological researchers working in Carthage at this time (as a necessity

17 Leveau 1976: 149.

18 For more on chronological changes between inhumation and cremation burials in North Africa, see Février 1992.

19 Poulsen 1983.

at the American and Italian sites mentioned above), directors were anxious to glean as much data as possible from any skeletal material collected. Collaboration among projects, moreover, was encouraged in this respect. Consequently, human osteologists found themselves at an advantage, with access to large collections from controlled and multidisciplinary excavations. Far more questions could be asked of the skeletal data, beyond their use as artefacts to be seriated; moreover, the research was now being conducted chiefly by physical anthropologists and related specialists who were highly trained in osteological analysis but also cognizant of archaeological and ancient historical data, as opposed to investigations conducted by generalized archaeologists who had some interest in skeletons, or those by biologists and anatomists with little training in archaeology or ancient history.

The Italian team was the first to publish the results of their work, a report on 35 skeletons recovered from the third- to second-century B.C.E. Punic necropolis located on the north side of Carthage, just outside the Theodosian Wall.[20] The authors implemented new methodological and technical approaches to osteological research that were shaping the discipline at this time and they drew on a number of lines of evidence, such as age and sex data, elemental representation, measurements, and palaeopathology in their analyses. Twelve adult males, 11 adult females, and 12 juveniles were recognized. On average, males outlived females by about 10 years; the average age of death for females was approximately 31 years, while that for males was about 41 years.[21] Visible infant mortality was relatively low – approximately 9 per cent of the entire sample died between 1 month and 2 years of age. If they survived beyond this critical stage, then most individuals reached their thirties at least. Pathological conditions, especially *cribra orbitalia*,[22] were more prevalent among

20 Mallegni et al. 1980.

21 On historical development of age estimation techniques from skeletal remains, and their related problems and limitations, see Kemkes-Grottenthaler 2002.

22 Cribra orbitalia is a metabolic disorder characterized by the appearance of lesions that appear as porous or pitted areas on the superior surface of the eye orbits. It is more frequent among infants and children in archaeological samples, although healed lesions are sometimes discernible in adult skeletons (Kilgore and Jurmain 1988: 274–75). The etiology of this condition is complex, with a range of agents such as hemolytic conditions (e.g., various anemias, thalassemia, and also malaria), dietary deficiencies, and parasitic infections cited as major causal factors. Each illness or stress, however, acts to reduce the body's available store of normally functioning hemoglobin. The body attempts to compensate by expanding the diplöe, or layer of cancellous, hemoglobin-producing tissue between the inner and outer tables of the cranium. This excess, sponge-like bone

females and children than among males. Harris's lines[23] were also more frequent in women than men. Combined, these data suggest that these Punic women and children experienced more nutritional, dietary, and developmental stresses than did their male counterparts, with iron deficiency anemia historically recognized as a probable cause. This condition is commonly seen in women who cannot sustain adequate levels of iron as a consequence of the physiological demands imposed while nursing children. The authors later add that the pattern of cribra orbitalia exhibited is consistent with a population that was slipping into a lower standard of nutritional health, given that this sudden change would affect first the children and later the adults.[24] They speculate that the cause of this could be related to warfare, possibly the Second Punic War.[25] Further conclusions proposed from the analysis of this Punic sample included (1) medium-high stature;[26] (2) noticeable morphometrical and morphological homogeneity among the individuals, a situation that might arise if the deceased were related, such as in a family tomb; (3) crania displaying recurring traits characteristic of Berber 'races'; and (4) a high degree of dental wear, but with a low incidence of dental caries.

An American-led project, under the auspices of the University of Michigan, continued research in this cemetery area that was originally discovered by the Italian team and located just outside the Theodosian Wall on the north side of Carthage. While the final report for the skeletal material excavated is pending, preliminary analyses of the structure and alignment of the 218 tombs excavated show a remarkable variety in burial type, including simple inhumations, amphora burials, cist burials, as well as dumps where human bones presumably had been piled up or deposited into

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protrudes from the orbital region and is eventually exposed and made visible at the bone surface as a porous and pitted bone (Kilgore and Jurmain 1988: 275; Steinbock 1976).

23 Harris's lines are regions of disrupted and arrested bone growth that occur during development. They typically appear as transverse lines of opaque, dense bone visible in radiographs of long bones of the body (Hughes et al. 1996). In some cases, they can be used to assess the age at which an individual experienced growth disruption and subsequent recovery.

24 Fornaciari et al. 1983.

25 Ibid.: 1983: 70.

26 Stature estimates derive from length of the long bones and are based upon those established by Trotter and Gleser (1952, 1958) for modern American whites (i.e., of European descent). There are certainly difficulties associated with extrapolating these modern American data to ancient populations. First, nutritional status during the period of growth and development may have varied between the two populations. Second, the impact of genetic variation affecting height among these geographically and temporally separated populations (i.e., American whites and ancient North Africans) is not known.

a communal pit.[27] Ages were mixed, with examples of young infants through to adults encountered, and in one case a burial of an adult with a baby or a young infant.[28] The diversified nature of the burials, coupled with their generally poor state led Mark Garrison to suggest that 'this cemetery represented the lower to middle economic classes';[29] however, some funerary mosaics associated with several graves suggested a higher economic status for select individuals. All the bodies recovered were placed in a supine position and aligned parallel to the city wall, with the head facing west in all but 11 of the 218 cases.[30]

Burials were also encountered at the Danish-sponsored UNESCO excavations of a late-antique house situated in the north-east quarter of ancient Carthage, outside the Theodosian Wall. Here, the situation differed from that of the Italian and American excavations in that these tombs dated to the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., and were dug into the floors of an abandoned Roman villa, as opposed to being placed within a recognized cemetery.[31] Three distinct groups of burials were distinguished at the Danish site, with the bulk of the report devoted to describing the context of each cluster. Consequently, less analysis focuses on the skeletal remains themselves. Nevertheless, the assemblages are very interesting. Two tombs, AO and AG, appear to be mass graves, containing approximately 30 and 5 individuals, respectively. Homogeneity in the position of the skeletons (head to south or west, extended burials with left hand and forearm under the left side of the body and right arm and hand lying along the side of the body), in age clusters (no individuals between 5 and 20 years of age), and in their date and associated grave goods, coupled with the fact that no skeletons show signs of violence led Erik Poulsen to conclude that 'the cause of death might have been famine or an epidemic.'[32]

Infant and child burials predominate in the remaining context (Tomb CL) distinguished at the Danish site. Many of these were amphora burials, which differ chronologically from those in Tombs AO and AG above in being deposited over a longer period of time, as witnessed by much stratigraphic disturbance in the area.[33] In other words, these were not mass graves, but progessive accumulations of infant and young children burials over the course of the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. Little else could be

27 Garrison 1989b: 26–29.
28 Garrison and Stevens 1992: 133.
29 Garrison 1989b: 29.
30 Ibid.: 26; Garrison and Stevens 1992: 133.
31 Poulsen 1983. These graves are further discussed by Anna Leone (this volume).
32 Ibid.: 149.
33 Ibid.: 151.

concluded about this context given the poor state of preservation for most of these infant bones.

Of all the UNESCO-sponsored excavations in Carthage where human skeletal remains were encountered, that from the Byzantine cemetery in the circus is probably most instrumental in establishing precedents in the field of osteological research in North Africa. It is highly detailed and includes a catalogue of burials, complete with plans and photographs, as well as an extensive analysis of the data, including age, sex, condition, stature, and pathology, and even an examination of the variation in the chemical composition of the remains through elemental analysis.[34] Lynn Kilgore and Robert Jurmain (1988) explicitly state the methodology used in their study and include comparative data when available. Age estimates indicate a higher infant mortality rate than in the Punic sample above. Approximately 20 per cent of the minimum count of 30 skeletons from the Byzantine sample was under 2 years of age. Childhood deaths are also fairly substantial, with approximately 27 per cent of the Byzantine sample aged between 2 and 10 years compared to only about 6 per cent in the Punic case outlined above. If it can be assumed that both samples reflect the population demographics of their respective periods,[35] then this pattern suggests that living conditions were much more stressful for infants and children during Byzantine times than during Punic times. Sex ratios, however, are more balanced between the two samples, with 7 adult males and 6 adult females securely sexed in the Byzantine sample, compared to 12 males and 11 females in the Punic sample. It seems that neither cemetery displayed any segregation in terms of male or female burial. Stature estimates are limited but show the Byzantine group to be rather small, on average, although not excessively so when contrasted with the Punic sample. Tooth wear is not as marked in the Byzantine sample; however, this could be a factor of the lower average age of the population in this case. Regardless, dental health appears to be fairly good among both samples and might be linked to the urbanized society of Carthage, where food contamination from dust and

34 For the catalogue, see Humphrey and Kilgore 1988; for the analysis, see Kilgore and Jurmain 1988; for the examination of chemical and elemental composition, see Sandford, Repke, and Earle 1988.

35 Technically, a sample of 30 skeletons is considered rather small for statistical purposes, but this does not necessarily imply that palaeodemographic patterns drawn from it are incorrect or biased. Palaeodemography, including questions of infant mortality rates, is a complex topic and no universal formula can be applied to all sites. For further comment, see (among many others) Buikstra and Konigsberg 1985; Konigsberg and Frankenburg 1992; Jackes 1992, 2000; Paine and Harpending 1996; and Masset 1999. Walter Scheidel (2001) examines the evidence and models used to reconstruct demographic patterns for the Roman world.

grit, two principal factors contributing to rapid tooth wear, was probably minimized. Degenerative lesions were seen in 8 burials from the Byzantine cemetery; trauma in 5; inflammatory reaction in 5; and metabolic and developmental disorders each were present in 2 individuals.

A small sample of skeletons – 2 adult (older than 18 years of age), 6 subadult (between 10 and 18 years of age), and 2 infant (less than 5 months of age) – was recovered from the Salammbo site, an area excavated by British-sponsored teams in the UNESCO Carthage campaign.[36] These remains date from the fifth to the seventh century C.E. and thus are relatively contemporary with those from the Byzantine cemetery excavated by the American team. They differ from the Byzantine example, however, in the relatively high proportion of subadults interred. Standard data about the sex, stature, preservation state, and pathological condition of these skeletal remains were reported where available, but the predominance of subadults in the collection, coupled with the fragmented status of much of the material inhibited reporting of complete results in many cases. One pathological disorder of note is the occurrence of cribra orbitalia in two of the subadult crania. This metabolic condition is the most prevalent disorder among the skeletal remains studied from the Italian, American, and British projects in Carthage, but it is not unexpected, given that the Tunisian coast is part of the Mediterranean malarial belt where hemoglobin disorders, such as anemia and thalasemmia, are relatively common. Other ailments such as parasitic infection and weanling diarrhea would have added to the stresses placed on hemoglobin stores and led to cribra orbitalia, especially in infants and children.

While Carthaginian material dominated the pool of skeletal data being produced in the 1970s and 1980s in North Africa, some research is available for other sites. A funerary enclosure containing mostly neonates and infants, and dating from the first to third centuries C.E. was excavated at El Jem (ancient Thysdrus). A preliminary report for this cemetery is available (Slim 1984), but it does not detail all aspects of the osteological data. The excavators distinguish three levels of burials, with the earliest (Augustan to late first century C.E.) being the richest, densest, and least disturbed. Excavation of this level revealed 52 inhumation burials, 29 of which were in a supine position. Most were aligned in an east-west direction over a north-south orientation.

Skeletal remains of Roman date were also retrieved from nine tombs at the site of Ghirza, on the desert frontier in Libya (Cowper 1984). It

36 Schwartz and Dirkmaat 1984.

appears that eight of these burials were inhumations, the remaining one a cremation. Adult males predominated (although sex could not be determined among the entire sample), with several tombs housing the remains of individuals aged at approximately 30 to 40 years, or older. A few of these adults showed traces of stress in the form of arthritic lipping and dental fracturing, the latter attributed to a severe blow or fall.

Two other noteworthy cemetery excavations during the 1970s and 1980s include important Punic sites. The first, the cemetery at Kerkouane, contains a number of burials, but little is currently available about the actual skeletal remains recovered, as opposed to the analysis of the grave goods and burial rituals associated with the cemetery.[37] The second, that of the tophet in Carthage (fig. 1.4 above) is similarly heavily weighted towards archaeological investigations of Punic rituals, such as child sacrifice, as opposed to a detailed reporting of the osteological remains recovered during excavations.[38]

## 1990s and beyond

The foundations in skeletal research and reporting of North African material established during the period of UNESCO-sponsored excavations in Carthage have generally continued through to the present. A number of reports with publication dates in the 1990s and beyond are available. Most of these pertain to materials recovered from Carthage (sites of the Theodosian Wall,[39] Bir el Knissia,[40] Yasmina,[41] Circular Harbour–North Side,[42] and Douar-Chott[43]) and Leptiminus (Site 10,[44] Site 250,[45] and Sites

37 Gallet de Santerre et al. 1983.

38 For more about the tophet in Carthage, see, in particular, Hurst 1999 and Stager 1992. Mention here should also be made of Bénichou-Safar's 1982 volume that examines the range of Punic tombs recovered from Carthage. While the focus of her volume is principally on the structure and non-osteological contents of these tombs, she does provide statistics on the number of individuals within each tomb, as well as some data about body placement and alignment, much of which is noted in earlier reports such as those of Delattre and others.

39 For results of the Italian excavations of the cemetery in this area see Mallegni et al. 1980; Fornaciari et al. 1983; and Carandini et al. 1983. For the American excavations of the Theodosian Wall cemetery site see Garrison 1989a and 1989b and Garrison and Stevens 1992.

40 Walth and Miller 1993.

41 Annabi 1992; Norman and Haeckl 1993; Norman 1995, 2002, 2003.

42 Hurst and Duhig 1994.

43 Roudesli-Chebbi 1994a.

44 Osborne 1992; Osborne and Stirling 1992; Walth 2001; Walth and Mattingly 2001.

45 Rife 2001.

290 and 302[46]). Others examine burials from El Jem,[47] Thina,[48] Pupput,[49] Cherchel,[50] Leptis Magna,[51] and Cyrene.[52] In addition to these published reports, several current or recent excavations of burials in North Africa are currently under analysis.[53] Each of these examples considers a variable number of skeletons, but normally no more than 25 per report. Temporally, the data are weighted towards Late Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine burials, at least in the case of the Carthage material, although some fairly recent research was conducted on crania recovered from Punic tombs excavated by Delattre, Gauckler, and others in the area,[54] while the Yasmina necropolis in Carthage contained cremation burials of Imperial date. The Leptiminus skeletal sample spans the second to third centuries C.E. at Site 10, the second to fourth centuries C.E. at Site 302, mid-third century C.E. or later at site 290, and the late fourth to fifth or early sixth centuries C.E. at Site 250. The Leptis Magna tombs range from the first to fourth centuries C.E., those at Cherchel cluster in the second to fifth centuries C.E., while the two individuals represented in the skeletal remains from Cyrene likely date to a time close to the destruction of the sanctuary at this site, that is, in the third or fourth century C.E.

There is a division in the presentation of data among these more recent reports. Those concerning the sites of Thina, El Jem, and to some degree Pupput and Cherchel consider the skeletal data in a more typo-

46 Meiklejohn 2000.

47 Slim 1992–93.

48 Jedda 1995.

49 Bailet 2004.

50 M'Hamed 1999.

51 For remains from Gasr Gelda, situated about 2.5 km from Leptis Magna, see Mallegni 1996; for those from Wadi er-Rsaf, also in the vicinity of Leptis Magna, see Mallegni et al. 1997. Tomb excavations are often reported in the 'Archaeological News' section of *Libya Antiqua* (e.g., Al-Rahman 1995; Faraj et al. 1997); however, in these articles little is generally noted concerning any skeletal remains recovered.

52 Crabtree 1990.

53 These include the Yasmina necropolis (analysis by G. Compton); Bir el Jebbana (analysis by E. Pennefather-O'Brien); Byrsa Hill (analysis by C. Walth); the Vandalic cemetery at Carthage (analysis by C. Walth); Leptiminus Site 2000 (analysis by C. Walth); and Leptiminus 2004–06 cemetery excavations (analysis by A. Keenleyside). A report on the skeletal remains from the site of Bir Ftouha, a Christian church complex in Carthage, has recently been published (Walth 2005), but was not available in time to include in this chapter.

54 Roudesli-Chebbi 1994b, 1995, 1996. The skull reported upon in Roudesli-Chebbi 1996, from a 6th-century B.C.E. Punic tomb in Carthage, is particularly noteworthy for its remarkable state of preservation.

logical context, detailing body position and orientation, often illustrated with a plan drawing or photograph, in a style reminiscent of the French tradition of research in Algeria. Data concerning age and sex occasionally supplement the analysis, but the chief focus is clearly the material items associated with the graves, rather than the skeletons themselves. Palaeodemography, pathological conditions, and morphometrics are generally not considered, although in some cases dental wear data are used to estimate age, while the entire length of the skeleton from head to foot is measured as a rough guide to height. At Thina, bodies are generally aligned in a north-south direction, sometimes north-west/south-east. Four of the 16 inhumation burials were of infants, the bulk of which were interred in amphorae. More information is provided for El Jem, where 24 tombs are described. Body orientation varies depending on which section of the site is being considered, but 9 of the burials tend to follow an east-west alignment, while the remaining ones are typically oriented north-south. Arm position also fluctuates, but in most instances arms are positioned alongside the body. Adults predominate in this sample, with only one subadult identified conclusively. Cremations predominate in the Pupput examples, so more attention here is focused on the variability exhibited due to different burning, disposal, and preservation conditions. As cremated bone is often fragmentary, less demographic data are retrievable, although Paul Bailet (2004) does attempt to estimate the percentage of bone left in the Pupput examples, and provides age, sex, and skeletal health information where possible. Chérif Slimane M'Hamed (1999) similarly provides age data from the Cherchel tombs, drawing chiefly on the sample of mandibular teeth. Supplementary information about health is also inferred from observations of the long bones from this collection, with the presence of a fracture and an incidence of osteoporosis noted.

The remaining reports concerning burials from Carthage, Leptiminus, Leptis Magna, and Cyrene normally follow the American, Italian, and British models of data presentation that treat the skeletal evidence as a means to reconstruct ancient demography, diets, and health, as well as a source of data about burial customs and ideology. Consequently, each is generally associated with a detailed catalogue that lists the skeletal elements recovered from each burial context, notes the body orientation and positioning, comments on the condition of the remains, chronicles age and sex statistics and the methods used to determine these, describes any pathological conditions visible on the remains and postulates probable causes, sketches a plan of the burial, often with accompanying photographs, and provides supplemental notes about the archaeological context surrounding

each burial, including tomb architecture and grave goods. Supplemental tables list metric and non-metric data or summarize other pertinent data such as elevation. The purpose of the catalogue and summary tables is to establish a standardized and complete record of each burial to ensure comparability both between and among sites. The fact that this can lead to a fairly lengthy and somewhat repetitive account, which might be deemed valuable only to physical anthropologists and related specialists, however, is problematic in the world of classical archaeology, especially given the costs of publication. The situation is worsened in many cases because the small sample sizes (most sites report no more than 25 burials at a time, and the sample from Cyrene contains only two skeletons – a very young child and a fetus) do not lend themselves to in-depth analyses of population demographics, health, or burial practices. Many of the above authors, moreover, find themselves apologizing for not being able to posit broad patterns to characterize the entire ancient population of North Africa, but offer preliminary observations derived from their sample as a substitute.

## Synthesizing the Osteological Data: General Observations

There is no denying that we are still at a stage in terms of ancient North African human osteological data where the questions we wish to ask and the reconstructions we seek are hampered by insufficient data and small sample sizes. Although there are problems associated with pooling burial data from various sites in an effort to augment sample size and achieve a somewhat 'average' picture of North African life and death patterns, this process is nonetheless necessary to recognize individual samples or sites that might deviate excessively from these normed results, and whose 'abnormal' patterns might require further analysis and explanation. Sample size must always be considered, and there is no guarantee that observed patterns in the skeletal data are indeed representative of the general ancient population as a whole rather than being a factor of a small, biased sample. Trends may be recognized and outlined, but the statistical validity of these cannot be tested given the small and patchy sample sizes and limited contextual information that is still reported in many cases.

With these caveats in mind, I offer several observations concerning the North Africa skeletal data, drawing mostly from reports that incorporate a catalogue of burials, since these are more likely to provide information about each individual burial as opposed to those that summarize findings from the entire sample. I shall restrict my analysis to inhumation burials,

given that skeletal remains are less likely to be recovered in complete states in cremation burials.[55]

Supine burials clearly predominate in the available pool of inhumations analysed, regardless of geographic locale or temporal period. More rarely are bodies placed in other positions, be this flexed, crouched, or on one side (more often the left as opposed to the right, however). With the exception of the isolated flexed and crouched examples, legs are generally extended straight. Arm position is much more variable, however. More cases have the arms lying straight along the body, but a significant number are also shown with arms positioned so that the hands sit on the pelvis. Again, there is no pattern to this in terms of time period, geography, or sex, but perhaps there is one in terms of age given that children and infants are almost exclusively buried with arms at their sides. There is no sure explanation as to why one form of hand positioning was chosen over another. In some cases, it might relate to the confines of the tomb, coffin, or grave pit, given that those buried in a more restrictive, narrower space, such as that imposed by the curvature of amphora pieces used to cover the deceased or that imposed by a slender coffin or sarcophagus, tend also to have their arms pushed inwards with hands on the hips. Alternatively, the arm position chosen might simply reflect what was deemed most appropriate aesthetically for the particular person being buried, if indeed it was a deliberate and meaningful action. Garrison notes that fragments of cloth were recovered in several burial contexts at the Theodosian Wall cemetery.[56] This recovery, coupled with the fact that many of the skeletons examined here had extended legs with knees that were positioned unnaturally close together, led him to suggest that bodies may have been tightly wrapped in a shroud.

There is a long tradition of recording head position and grave orientation among North African burials. Certainly this is essential to chronicle at each site, given that it can be useful in demarcating reuse, burial disturbance, group clustering, or wall orientation, among other factors. Overall, bodies aligned in a general north-south direction with head either to the north or south predominate at most sites (east-west orientation with head to the west is the next popular alignment); however, no uniform standard exists in terms of grave orientation and head position among the North

55 It is important to note that cremated skeletal remains can still provide much information about an ancient population, even if the sample of bone is generally more fragmentary and incomplete when compared to that from an inhumation burial.

56 Garrison 1989a: 17.

African burials when considered as a whole. It would appear that orientation was often determined by restrictions imposed by existing walls, in the case of burials that were placed in rooms, or followed the pattern already in place, in the case of burials being added to a pre-existing cemetery. The predominantly north-south pattern is probably due to coincidence in terms of structural alignment among sites rather than to any ideological belief that dictated grave orientation or head position. The Roman tradition of well-defined extramural burial areas continued into the Christian period, but was supplemented at this time by the practice of burying in confined areas in and around certain churches. Obviously, the existing church architecture in the latter cases would influence the positioning and orientation of these types of burials.

What demographic patterns, in terms of age and sex ratios, arise from these pooled data? One interesting observation is that the number of males recognized normally outnumbers the number of females. This ratio varies from a high of about 3 males for every female to a near balance of approximately 1.2 males for every female. Sex is best determined in the mature skeleton, so this apparent male bias should be considered as reflective only of the adult population. Moreover, it should be remembered that sample sizes are small (often under 10 in the majority of cases); thus, the degree to which each cemetery excavation represents a completely random sampling of the ancient population is uncertain in many instances (and unlikely in some such as the infant cemetery at Thysdrus or the Leptiminus Site 250 sample with its preponderance of children; however, in these cases, sex cannot be determined for these children and infants). Still, the bias towards adult males raises questions about the overall health and status of women.[57] Assuming a near equal birth rate between the sexes, these data suggest that more North African girls, or at least subadult women, died at younger ages when compared to their male counterparts. The exact role that such factors as female infanticide, poor nutrition, disease, and other afflictions and hardships had on this pattern of differential deaths between males and females is difficult to determine, but no doubt a variety of factors played a part, and these need not be universal in their contribution.[58]

57 Another factor to consider in the under-representation of females in the skeletal record is the overall accuracy of the standards used to estimate sex from osteological remains, as well the issue of inter-population variability in sexual dimorphism. Moreover, further problems can appear with inter- and intra-observer biases and errors in determining sex from the skeleton.

58 For more concerning infants and children in antiquity, notably the stresses and hardships they faced (including infanticide), see Boswell 1988; Garnsey 1991; Golden 1988; Néraudau 1984; and Scott 1999.

Males often assume more dangerous occupations and duties within a society, including military activity. Consequently, the preponderance of male deaths in these North African examples might be related to the increased risk of being killed while undertaking these roles. It might also be possible, however, that some measure of sexual segregation occurred, with those examples currently excavated representing male-dominated burial contexts. Perhaps a greater proportion of female skeletons remains buried in separate cemeteries not yet investigated. Given the separation displayed by age groups in some ancient cemeteries, it is possible that some were also divided by sex, even if no such cemeteries have been uncovered. It is possible that sexual segregation existed in a less obvious fashion within a cemetery.

Age patterns might help clarify whether indeed a high infant and child mortality rate occurred in North Africa during antiquity. Child (in this case, under 10 years) and infant deaths account for a low of ca 20 per cent in the Punic sample analysed by the Italian crew to a high of ca 70 per cent in the Leptiminus Site 250 site.[59] Most other sites, however, average between 30 and 50 per cent infant and child burials. This average accords with the estimated average non-adult mortality rate of ca 40 per cent as calculated by George Acsádi and János Nemeskéri (1970) for numerous prehistoric to medieval European skeletal populations. There is no way to determine conclusively if more girls than boys were dying, given the difficulties associated with assigning sex to an immature skeleton.

Although some generalizations can be made about the overall, predicted demography of ancient North Africa on the basis of the average values of infant, subadult, and adult deaths in the skeletal record, it is important to note that exceptional cases exist, and likely no one cemetery perfectly reflects the true demographic pattern. Exceptionally high or low values in any one age category could relate to differential disposal of the dead by age in separate areas of the cemetery or in separate cemeteries altogether, assuming, of course, that preservation and retrieval biases have not favoured the recovery of bones from one age category over another.[60] In such a case, the low recovery of infant skeletons in the Punic example might be a factor of their burial in a tophet or other type of cemetery for children. A number of infant cemeteries are reported from Roman contexts throughout the Mediterranean world,[61] including the site

59 This excludes the infant cemetery site at Thysdrus.

60 Infant bone is often more susceptible to post-depositional destruction compared to its adult counterpart. Guy, Masset, and Baud (1997) provide further details about the taphonomy of infant bones.

61 Soren, Fenton, and Birky (1999) discuss the Late Roman infant cemetery at Poggio Gramignano, Italy, and provide further references to such cases in the Roman world.

of Thysdrus, Tunisia, where a first- to third-century C.E. funerary enclosure that contained mostly neonates and infants was excavated.[62] Age separation might even occur within a single cemetery as well. Differential disposal of the dead by age categories in separate sections of the cemetery was apparently practised at the Yasmina necropolis in Carthage,[63] so one needs always to consider the portion of the cemetery excavated and its relationship to other parts of the same cemetery. Still, if one finds a preponderance of infant or adult skeletons in a cemetery that otherwise contains a mix of both younger and older individuals and no distinct indications of age segregation among the sample, then one might conclude that this death assemblage reflects a similar situation in the living assemblage.[64]

Little can be made of the available skeletal data on stature. The meagre figures obtained from the various samples provide the following ranges of estimated heights:

- males: ca 158–ca 190 cm
- females: ca 150–ca 170 cm

Punic values[65] are generally slightly smaller than their Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine counterparts, which might suggest an ethnic difference, but height is determined by a complex set of genetic, environmental, and dietary/nutritional factors, all of which need to be standardized before any cross cultural comparisons can be made.

Palaeopathology is one field of research that has expanded considerably since the UNESCO days in North Africa, to the point that it now represents a major portion of each skeletal report. It is important to remember, however, that many diseases do not leave traces on the skeleton, and that an unequivocal diagnosis of those lesions and pathological conditions present on the skeleton is not always obtainable.[66] It is crucial to

62 Slim 1984.

63 Norman 2002, 2003.

64 Although skeletal data are a valuable source of demographic information, they are not the only one. The rich epigraphic record for North Africa has been extensively analysed for such evidence, most notably by Lassère 1977 and Suder 1984 and 1985. While these epigraphic data present their own methodological, chronological, and interpretational problems, their value may be greatly enhanced when compared with the skeletal data. Mattingly and Hitchner (1995: 174) comment that 'the published [osteological] studies seem to indicate far higher levels of infant mortality and far shorter adult life-spans than the epigraphic material suggests.'

65 As reported by Mallegni et al. 1980: 406.

66 There is an immense body of literature concerning palaeopathology in human osteological research in general. See Larsen 1997; Lovell 2000; Hillson 2000; and Ortner 2003 for further references.

describe and document these conditions in a clear and detailed manner so that comparisons can be made with other samples.

While the bulk of the North African skeletal data show few pathological conditions, and the group could be argued to be in relatively good health, one pathological condition that does occur fairly regularly is cribra orbitalia. Although this condition can have multiple causes and is now generally considered to be in the category of non-specific indicators of stress, it has historically been associated with iron deficiency anemia, and such an etiology seems sensible in the case of the North African samples, given that the area is part of the Mediterranean malarial belt. That cribra orbitalia appears to be more common among women and children in the North African skeletal material is not unexpected, since these groups may have been under greater stresses – women through pregnancy and nursing demands imposed by any newborn children, and children due to their more fragile disposition and augmented physiological needs, especially during the first few years of their lives.

Most other non-dental pathological conditions recorded in the North African material are ailments such as traumatic injuries and degenerative disorders. Broken bones and healed fractures occur. Many of these are cases of broken ribs, hands, and feet – all wounds that can result from a bad fall. Another category of non-dental pathologies that occurs with some regularity is degenerative disorders, most notably osteoarthritis. This affects the joints in the appendicular and vertebral skeleton. Again, there is nothing striking about the distribution of these disorders among the North African material. Typically, these were associated with mature and elderly individuals who would have lived longer and consequently imposed more stress on their joints, some of which degraded to produce the conditions associated with osteoarthritis. They may also give an indication of repetitive habitual activities, such as grinding grain, preparing tools, or even excessive walking over difficult terrain.

Dental lesions are noted in a number of the samples from North Africa. Caries (cavities) predominate, augmented incidences of which are believed to be the result of higher intake of carbohydrates, perhaps coupled with poor nutrition. Although caries do occur in hunter-gatherer groups who consume significant quantities of carbohydrates (such as collected figs or dates),[67] the condition is relatively common in archaeological specimens typically associated with sedentary agricultural sites. Consequently, their presence among the ancient sites contributing skeletal data to the North African pool examined here can help infer similar conditions (i.e.,

67 Meiklejohn et al. 1988.

sedentary, agricultural) for those cultures. Given that the frequency of caries is not markedly different among the North African material, it would appear that diets (or at least levels of carbohydrates) did not vary much geographically. Stresses still occurred and the presence of enamel hypoplasia[68] at several sites provides proof of this. Again, however, much of this stress (be it related to nutritional deficiencies, immune incompetence, or exposure to infectious diseases) affected children and could be attributed to a number of factors such as weaning practices, parasitic infection, and general exposure to the environment. Adults may have been under similar duress, but as enamel hypoplasia is only visible osteologically in developing teeth, this indicator can only infer stress during the period from birth up to about 12 years of age.

Other dental pathological conditions, such as tooth loss, calculus, abnormal wear, and abscess formation, are recorded in several instances but never in any remarkable pattern to indicate population differences among the samples.[69]

Non-metric traits[70] are noted in a number of cases among the North African skeletal material, but this database is currently too small to distinguish any meaningful patterning of these features that might relate to genetic differences among populations. There is potential to this field, however, especially in testing hypotheses about the biological distance between or degree of relatedness of individuals both within and among cemeteries. If the Punic peoples were indeed related genetically to the original Berber peoples of North Africa, then this might be revealed in a pattern of shared non-metric traits. Moreover, one could, on the basis of non-metric criteria, generate hypotheses to test about the relationships among individuals in Roman, Byzantine, and Vandal cemeteries in North Africa, with questions about the origin of these groups.

Can outliers, or examples that do not fit the general patterns displayed, be recognized in this synthesis of skeletal data from ancient sites in North

68 Enamel hypoplasia is a defect of the tooth enamel, visible as lines or grooves running transversely across the labial surface of the tooth. These represent an interruption of the development of tooth enamel, caused by a variety of specific and non-specific stress factors, such as nutritional disorders, dietary deficiencies, and disease (Jurmain and Kilgore 1988: 267; Hillson 2000).

69 Such a state could also, however, reflect the research interests of the physical anthropologists who examined the material, some of whom may not have emphasized dental pathologies in their reports.

70 Non-metric traits are features, such as foramina (holes), facets, notches, grooves, and similar skeletal characteristics that are scored on a present/absent basis. These are detailed more fully in Berry and Berry 1967; Finnegan 1978; and Saunders 1978 and 1989.

Africa? The collection of sites discussed here does not differ markedly in terms of burial orientation and body position, which might suggest some measure of uniform mortuary behaviour was practised throughout ancient North Africa. Moreover, the sites do not vary greatly when one compares sex ratios and pathological conditions from the skeletal remains, which might indicate a relatively consistent pattern of health and diet among the populations sampled. Age comparisons, however, are a different story. Special cases certainly exist here that require explanation, but the degree to which these patterns are a consequence of ancient cultural practices or are affected by recovery, taphonomic, sampling, and reporting biases associated with excavation is not always easy to determine for each site, and in most cases is impossible to understand fully.[71] The funerary enclosure containing mostly neonates and infants at Thysdrus is unique among the cemeteries reported here, and raises questions about age segregation in ancient North African cemeteries. Why this was practised in some areas and not others, however, remains to be answered. The subadult and child mortality rates were high at Site 250 in Leptiminus (i.e., 16 out of 21 individuals were subadults, of which 11 to 14 were under 5 years of age); however, the fact that adults were also interred at this site makes it difficult to argue for strict spatial segregation of age categories in this cemetery, if indeed there was a conscious effort to promote this practice.

At the opposite end of the demographic spectrum, infant and child deaths are under-represented at the Punic site in Carthage, excavated by the Italian team, and in the Byzantine Bir el Knissia cemetery in Carthage. The Punic case has been discussed above. It is unlikely this sample represents a very healthy group wherein infant and child mortality was exceptionally low, especially given the high incidence of cribra orbitalia noted in the adult females from this cemetery. This population certainly experienced great stress, which would probably correlate with a high infant mortality rate. It is possible that the Punic infants expected in this sample were buried elsewhere, such as in a tophet.

The Bir el Knissia sample is very small and fragmentary,[72] so the lower mortality rate of immature individuals here could simply be the result of sampling and taphonomic biases. Grave robbing occurred extensively at this site as well, which might also have reduced the available pool of

71 Waldron 1994.

72 In the three seasons of work at the site (i.e., 1990–92), 19 primary burials were excavated, of which 6 are reported upon in Walth and Miller 1993. In addition, over 12,000 pieces of disarticulated human bone were retrieved during the 1990 season at Bir el Knissia, but this material is of limited value for unbiased cultural and demographic reconstructions given its disturbed nature.

immature skeletons. It is also possible that the predominance of adults in this sample relates to the privileged position afforded by burial in or around the basilica.[73] Adults presumably had a higher status in this respect than did children, who in turn may have been buried elsewhere, in less prestigious venues.

## Peopling the North African Mortuary Landscape: What Can Human Osteological Research Offer?

While funerary monuments, cinerary urns, graves, and related structures and features provide essential clues to help recognize and reconstruct a mortuary landscape, it should be remembered that their ultimate purpose is to mark a burial or cremation of a deceased human being. Thus, at its core, a mortuary landscape is ultimately identified by the inhumed or cremated individuals contained within it. Indeed, there may even be cases where the bones are all that survive, or all that can be recovered from the archaeological record, as in the example of a burial without any architectural or artefactual evidence. Many of the same questions asked of the architectural and artefactual record, as outlined in the chapters above, can also be asked of the osteological record. The two sources are complementary. Common themes discussed in a number of the papers in this volume involve issues of ethnic identity,[74] lineality, kinship, status, and family structure as represented in funerary monuments, inscriptions, and grave goods. Genetic links among individuals can be assessed through DNA analysis using human bones, while the study of biological distance, through the examination of metric and non-metric traits as well as DNA patterning, can help distinguish ethnic identity or common descent groups, the members of whom share similar biological and genetic ancestry. Such methods are effective for the analysis of both intra- and inter-populational variation.

DNA can also be used to determine conclusively the sex of the deceased.[75] This is particularly helpful in cases where morphological indicators of sex, such as the pelvis or cranium, are missing or fragmentary. Moreover, sex determination in this manner can be an important check to gender identity of a burial that is based on the associated epigraphical or artefactual evidence. While DNA analysis provides great potential for future osteological research, it is important to appreciate that it is not

73 Walth and Miller 1993: 193.

74 Generally in physical anthropology 'ethnic identity' is referred to as 'population affinity.'

75 For further discussion and examples see Lassen et al. 1996; Stone 2000; Stone et al. 1996.

always possible to isolate and extract it from archaeological bone. Thus, it is still vital to approach the interpretation of ancient skeletal material from a variety of angles.

Diet, pathology, and activity can all leave osteological traces. Each is essential in the reconstruction of ancient life and can provide important correlates to the examination of mortuary landscapes. An epidemic, for example, may lead to a massive decline in a population that in turn can influence the manner of burial. Less effort might be invested in disposing of the dead in these cases if the stresses felt by the society in question were particularly harsh and the resources were simply not available to honour the dead in the traditional fashion. Nutritional status is a further topic to pursue, as it relates to dietary and disease-related stresses affecting life, with chronic conditions of poor nutrition likely leading to a reduction in a population's mean age at death. Activity levels can also be examined, as certain tasks that employ physical labour will build and increase muscles, which in turn can lead to modification of the bones upon which these muscles attach. Traumatic injuries, such as broken bones, also provide clues about lifestyle. Combined, then, skeletal analyses conducted to determine diet, pathology, and activity can augment any reconstruction of an ancient mortuary landscape as derived from artefactual, inscriptional, or architectural data. Does the occupation of an individual as reported on a tombstone correspond to expected activity markers on the skeleton (should these markers indeed be identified)? Did nutritional stress factor in the age at death of the individual? Were age, sex, and class differences noted? How do these results compare to the picture that might develop from other lines of evidence? Are inscriptions, for example, embellishing or misrepresenting details about a person's life? These questions might all be pursued through such integrated studies involving osteological and archaeological data.

Finally, bones are a source of chronological information. I have noted earlier how researchers developed relative chronologies[76] of North African burials using criteria such as the frequency of inhumations versus cremations, or changes in the orientation and positioning of the skeletons. Individual bones themselves can be dated in relative terms using techniques like fluoride dating, while other analyses, such as radiocarbon dating, can provide absolute dates for osteological remains. There are limitations to dating human bones based on these chemical and physical tests, and certain conditions must be met to reduce error and bias. Nevertheless, dating osteological materials themselves can serve as valuable checks to dates

76 'Relative' in this sense refers to something being older or younger than something else.

established using other techniques, such as numismatic evidence, inscriptions, or artefactual and architectural typologies and seriations.

## Human Osteological Evidence and the Mortuary Landscape: Conclusions and New Directions

Although North African skeletal research has grown and matured tremendously in the last twenty years, what is often lacking in the current framework of the discipline is a synthesis of the skeletal and burial data and a discussion of these results within the overall archaeological and historical context of the time. Henry Hurst and Corinne Duhig provide a start,[77] in the form of a narrative about the small collections of inhumations recovered from the British excavations of the Circular Harbour, North Side, in Carthage. They situate these burials within the greater temporal, spatial, and material context of the site by delving into an interpretation of why they are placed where they are, why they are associated with those artefacts that surround them, and, more importantly, what they can tell us about economic, demographic, and social conditions in ancient Carthage. Such a synthetic operation is daunting, however, since it requires a thorough understanding of all available sources of data – archaeological, historical, literary, and so forth – a formidable feat in itself, especially given the increasingly complex multidisciplinary perspectives that are constantly shaping the domain of archaeological research today. Even in a fairly self-contained field such as mortuary archaeology, one can expect a diverse collection of osteologists, anatomists, pathologists, biologists, geologists, chemists, photographers, draftspeople, and other specialists to work on the skeletal material itself, not to mention the team assembled to examine mortuary architecture, tomb type, epigraphy, grave goods, and other material remains associated with the burial.

Context is key to archaeological interpretation, so it is vital that these details be presented on a case-by-case basis with each burial. The current catalogue format of documenting the skeletal data for North African burials is ideally suited for such presentation, and every effort in the future should be made to conform to this standard to ensure comparability among sites. This approach is not without complications, however, given the expense of publishing. Editors may be reluctant to include long descriptive and pictorial accounts of each burial in their volumes, especially if little is done to interpret each burial and relate them as a whole. New methods of computer and web publishing, however, may provide a solution to this

77 Hurst and Duhig 1994: 312–13.

dilemma by creating more economical and accessible means to access the complete dataset.[78] Summary statistics and overall interpretations of the entire sample of skeletal data could then be provided within the published volume, so that readers could gain a better appreciation of the breadth and depth of information yielded by this osteological research. Certainly skeletal samples need to be interpreted within the context of the site in question, but more efforts should be made to compare those findings to the larger picture of research from neighbouring sites, and beyond this on a regional and cross-cultural scale. Only in this manner can the problems associated with small samples sizes be addressed effectively, and can more reliable, at least statistically reliable, interpretations and conclusions be drawn about ancient life and death. Marshall Becker summarizes and integrates skeletal data from a number of sites in ancient Sicily,[79] J. Lawrence Angel has published extensively on human bones recovered from prehistoric and ancient sites in the eastern Mediterranean,[80] but much of the rest of the Mediterranean world of antiquity has yet to be investigated in any extensive synthetic manner. Ian Morris (1987, 1992) addresses this deficit and uses examples from Rhodes, classical Athens, early imperial Rome, and the last days of the western Roman empire to illustrate the great potential contribution that osteological remains can yield in terms of reconstructing social history. Each of his examples, however, generally highlights a specific aspect of social reconstruction for a particular site or region, rather than serving as a more comprehensive analysis and synthesis of the osteological data for the area in question.

Archaeology has become a complex multidisciplinary subject, where the potential for future work is immense. Scientific developments have been especially instrumental in the field of human osteology as we come to decipher the intricacies of the skeleton as a biological, chemical, and physiological entity, but one can never dissociate these aspects from the role humans play as cultural agents and the material goods created and left behind by our actions. The interplay and interaction between biology and culture is key to a better understanding of either subject in and of itself. Consequently, neither should be neglected in any comprehensive reconstruction

78 Possible options are to present the dataset as a PDF file or include them on a CD with the volume.

79 Becker 1995, 2000.

80 A bibliography of Angel's work can be found in Roberts et al. 2005. In that same volume, Sherry Fox provides a comparative case study of Hellenistic and Roman skeletons recovered from Paphos, Cyprus, and Corinth, Greece, while Ray Laurence reviews the information provided from human skeletal materials at Roman Pompeii and Herculaneum.

of the past. Osteological research has made significant strides over the last century in terms of our knowledge of ancient North Africa and its people, and it will continue to add to our understanding of this group in the future. The complete data for each burial and skeleton are integral, however, and must be presented or otherwise made accessible in their entirety in order to define and refine our picture of ancient life and death. Kilgore and Jurmain summed this up over a decade ago when they stated:

> Analysis of material culture hitherto has provided most of what we know about people of the past, but human skeletons – the remains of the people themselves – have their own story to tell and it is only through their examination that a biological profile of earlier populations can be drawn. [81]

People define, construct, and shape their mortuary landscape through their use of material goods, artifacts, and features such as inscriptions, tombs, and mausolea; however, is not a mortuary landscape ultimately identified by the inhumed and cremated bodies buried within such an area, and for which the material remains above bear an association? Conditions may not always permit the analysis of both sources simultaneously, such as in a mausoleum robbed of its body, or a burial void of all artifacts, but where both do exist, cultural reconstructions can be that much stronger when both sources of data are examined and integrated as equals.

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81 Kilgore and Jurmain 1988: 279

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